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MODERN PROSE

EDITED BY
ELIZABETH D'OYLEY

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NARRATIVE PROSE

R. L. STEVENSON

THE ESCAPE

THE time for our escape drew near, and the nearer it came the less we seemed to enjoy the prospect. There is but one side on which this castle can be left either with dignity or safety; but as there is the main gate and guard, and the chief street of the upper city, it is not to be thought of by escaping prisoners. In all other directions an abominable precipice surrounds it, down the face of which (if anywhere at all) we must regain our liberty. By our concurrent labours in many a dark night, working with the most anxious precautions against noise, we had made out to pierce below the curtain about the south-west corner, in a place they call the *Devil's Elbow*. I have never met that celebrity; nor (if the rest of him at all comes up to what they called his elbow) have I the least desire of his acquaintance. From the heel of the masonry, the rascally breakneck precipice descended sheer among waste lands, scattered suburbs of the city, and houses in the building. I had never the heart to look for any length of time—the thought that I must make the descent in person some dark night robbing me of breath; and, indeed, on anybody not a seaman or a steeple-jack, the mere sight of the *Devil's Elbow* wrought like an emetic.

I don't know where the rope was got, and doubt if

I much cared. It was not that which gravelled me, but whether, now that we had it, it would serve our turn. Its length, indeed, we made a shift to fathom out; but who was to tell us how that length compared with the way we had to go? . . .

It was a good deal of a relief when the third evening closed about the castle with volumes of sea-fog. The lights of Princes Street sometimes disappeared, sometimes blinked across at us no brighter than the eyes of cats; and five steps from one of the lanterns on the ramparts it was already groping dark. We made haste to lie down. Had our jailers been upon the watch, they must have observed our conversation to die out unusually soon. Yet I doubt if any of us slept. Each lay in his place, tortured at once with the hope of liberty and the fear of a hateful death. The guard call sounded; the hum of the town declined by little and little. On all sides of us, in their different quarters, we could hear the watchman cry the hours along the street. Often enough, during my stay in England, have I listened to these gruff or broken voices; or perhaps gone to my window when I lay sleepless, and watched the old gentleman hobble by upon the causeway with his cape and his cap, his hanger and his rattle. It was ever a thought with me how differently that cry would re-echo in the chamber of lovers, beside the bed of death, or in the condemned cell. I might be said to hear it that night myself in the condemned cell! At length a fellow with a voice like a bull's began to roar out in the opposite thoroughfare:

'Past yin o'clock, and a dark, haary moarnin'.'

At which we were all silently afoot.

As I stole about the battlements towards the—gallows, I was about to write—the sergeant-major, perhaps

doubtful of my resolution, kept close by me, and occasionally proffered the most indigestible reassurances in my ear. At last I could bear them no longer.

'Be so obliging as to let me be!' said I. 'I am neither a coward nor a fool. What do *you* know of whether the rope be long enough? But I shall know it in ten minutes!'

The good old fellow laughed in his moustache, and patted me.

It was all very well to show the disposition of my temper before a friend alone; before my assembled comrades the thing had to go handsomely. It was then my time to come on the stage; and I hope I took it handsomely.

'Now, gentlemen,' said I, 'if the rope is ready, here is the criminal!'

The tunnel was cleared, the stake driven, the rope extended. As I moved forward to the place, many of my comrades caught me by the hand and wrung it, an attention I could well have done without.

'Keep an eye on Clausel!' I whispered to Laclas; and with that, got down on my elbows and knees, took the rope in both hands, and worked myself, feet foremost, through the tunnel. When the earth failed under my feet, I thought my heart would have stopped; and a moment after I was demeaning myself in mid-air like a drunken jumping-jack. I have never been a model of piety, but at this juncture prayers and a cold sweat burst from me simultaneously.

The line was knotted at intervals of eighteen inches; and to the inexpert it may seem as if it should have been even easy to descend. The trouble was, this devil of a piece of rope appeared to be inspired, not with life alone, but with a personal malignity against myself. It turned

to the one side, paused for a moment, and then spun me like a toasting-jack to the other; slipped like an eel from the clasp of my feet; kept me all the time in the most outrageous fury of exertion; and dashed me at intervals against the face of the rock. I had no eyes to see with; and I doubt if there was anything to see but darkness. I must occasionally have caught a gasp of breath, but it was quite unconscious. And the whole forces of my mind were so consumed with losing hold and getting it again, that I could scarce have told whether I was going up or coming down.

Of a sudden I knocked against the cliff with such a thump as almost bereft me of my sense; and, as reason twinkled back, I was amazed to find that I was in a state of rest, that the face of the precipice here inclined outwards at an angle which relieved me almost wholly of the burthen of my own weight, and that one of my feet was safely planted on a ledge. I drew one of the sweetest breaths in my experience, hugged myself against the rope, and closed my eyes in a kind of ecstasy of relief. It occurred to me next to see how far I was advanced on my unlucky journey, a point on which I had not a shadow of a guess. I looked up; there was nothing above me but the blackness of the night and the fog. I craned timidly forward and looked down. There, upon a floor of darkness, I beheld a certain pattern of hazy lights, some of them aligned as in thoroughfares, others standing apart as in solitary houses; and before I could well realize it, or had in the least estimated my distance, a wave of nausea and vertigo warned me to lie back and close my eyes. In this situation I had really but the one wish, and that was: something else to think of! Strange to say, I got it: a veil was torn from my mind, and I saw

what a fool I was—what fools we had all been—and that I had no business to be thus dangling between earth and heaven by my arms. The only thing to have done was to have attached me to a rope and lowered me, and I had never the wit to see it till that moment!

I filled my lungs, got a good hold on my rope, and once more launched myself on the descent. As it chanced, the worst of the danger was at an end, and I was so fortunate as to be never again exposed to any violent concussion. Soon after I must have passed within a little distance of a bush of wallflower, for the scent of it came over me with that impression of reality which characterizes scents in darkness. This made me a second landmark, the ledge being my first. I began accordingly to compute intervals of time: so much to the ledge, so much again to the wallflower, so much more below. If I were not at the bottom of the rock, I calculated I must be near indeed to the end of the rope, and there was no doubt that I was not far from the end of my own resources. I began to be light-headed and to be tempted to let go, —now arguing that I was certainly arrived within a few feet of the level and could safely risk a fall, anon persuaded I was still close at the top and it was idle to continue longer on the rock. In the midst of which I came to a bearing on plain ground, and had nearly wept aloud. My hands were as good as flayed, my courage entirely exhausted, and, what with the long strain and the sudden relief, my limbs shook under me with more than the violence of ague, and I was glad to cling to the rope.

But this was no time to give way. I had (by God's single mercy) got myself alive out of that fortress; and now I had to try to get the others, my comrades.

From *St. Ives*.

• HENRY JAMES

THE PHOTOGRAPH •

I REPAIRED with my father on an August day to the great Broadway establishment of Mr. Brady, supreme in that then beautiful art, and it is my impression—the only point vague with me—that though we had come up by the Staten Island boat for the purpose we were to keep the affair secret till the charming consequence should break, at home, upon my mother. . . .

My small point is simply, however, that the secrecy of our conjoined portrait was probably very soon, by his act, to begin a public and shining life and to enjoy it till we received the picture; as to which moreover still another remembrance steals on me, a proof of the fact that our adventure was improvised. Sharp again is my sense of not being so adequately dressed as I should have taken thought for had I foreseen my exposure; though the resources of my wardrobe as then constituted could surely have left me but few alternatives. The main resource of a small New York boy in this line at that time was the little sheath-like jacket, tight to the body, closed at the neck and adorned in front with a single row of brass buttons—a garment of scant grace assuredly and compromised to my consciousness, above all, by a strange ironic light from an unforgotten source. It was but a short time before those days that the great Mr. Thackeray¹ had come to America to lecture on ‘The English Humourists,’ and still present to me is the voice proceeding from my father’s library, in which some glimpse of me hovering, at an opening of the door, in passage or on

¹ W. M. Thackeray (1811–1863), author of *Vanity Fair*, etc.

staircase, prompted him to the formidable words: 'Come here, little boy, and show me your extraordinary jacket!' My sense of my jacket became from that hour a heavy one—further enriched as my vision is by my shyness of posture before the seated, the celebrated visitor, who struck me, in the sunny light of the animated room, as enormously big and who, though he laid on my shoulder the hand of benevolence, bent on my native costume the spectacles of wonder. I was to know later on why he had been so amused and why, after asking me if this were the common uniform of my age and class, he remarked that in England, were I to go there, I should be addressed as 'Buttons.' It had been revealed to me thus in a flash that we were somehow *queer*, and though never exactly crushed by it I became aware that I at least felt so as I stood with my head in Mr. Brady's vise. Beautiful most decidedly the lost art of the daguerreotype¹; I remember the 'exposure' as on this occasion interminably long, yet with the result of a facial anguish far less harshly reproduced than my suffered snapshots of a later age.

From *A Small Boy and Others*.

GEORGE MOORE

IN THE WOOD

. . . starting to his feet, Joseph began gathering flowers, but in a little while he stood still, his nosegay dropping flower by flower, for his thoughts had taken flight. The doves, the doves! he cried, looking into the blue and white sky. The doves have their nests in the woods, the larks

¹ An early form of photography, so called after Daguerre of Paris, who invented it in 1839.

build in the grass, he said, and asked Azariah to come with him. 'The nest was in a tuft. But I've not touched it, he said. Three years ago I used to rob all the nests and blow the eggs, for I was making a collection. Azariah asked him if the lark would grieve for her eggs, and Joseph answered that he supposed she would soon forget them. Hark to his singing! and he ran on into the outskirts of the woods, coming back a few minutes afterwards to ask Azariah to hasten, for the wood was more beautiful than any wood he had ever seen. And if thou knowest the trees in which the doves build I will climb and get the nest. Doves build in taller trees than these, in fir-trees, Azariah answered. But this is a pretty wood, Joseph. And he looked round the quiet sunny oak wood and began to tell that this wood was probably the remains of the ancient forests that had covered the country when the Israelites came out of the north of Arabia. How long ago was that, Master? Joseph asked, and Azariah hazarded the answer that it might be as many as fifteen hundred years ago. How old is the oldest oak-tree? Joseph inquired, and Azariah had again to hazard the answer that a thousand years would make an old tree. And when will these trees be in leaf, Master, and may we come to Arimathea when they are in leaf? And look! somebody has been felling trees here. Azariah looked round. The forest must have been supplying the city with firewood for many years, he said. All these trees are young and they are too regularly spaced for a natural growth. But higher up the hills the woods are denser and darker, and there we may find some old trees. Any badgers and foxes? Joseph asked, and shall we see any wolves?

The sunny woods were threaded with little paths, and

Joseph cast curious eyes upon them all. The first led him into bracken so deep that he did not venture farther, and the second took him to the verge of a dark hollow so dismal that he came running back to ask if there were crocodiles in the waters he had discovered. He did not give his preceptor time to answer the difficult question, but laid his hand upon his arm and whispered that he was to look between two rocks, for a jackal was there, slinking away—turning his pointed muzzle to them now and then. To see he isn't followed, Azariah added: and the observation endeared him so to Joseph that the boy walked for a moment content and pensive in the path they were following. It turned into the forest, and they had not gone very far before they became aware of a strange silence, if silence it could be called, for when they listened the silence was full of sound, innumerable little sounds, some of which they recognized; but it was not the hum of the insects or the chirp of a bird or the snapping of a rotten twig that filled Joseph with awe, but something that he could neither see, nor hear, nor smell, nor touch. The life of the trees—is that it? he asked himself. A remote and mysterious life was certainly breathing about him, and he regretted he was without a sense to apprehend this life. Again and again it seemed that the forest was about to whisper its secret, but something always happened to interrupt. Once it was certainly Azariah's fault, for just as the trees were about to speak he picked up a leaf and began to explain how the shape of an oak leaf differed from that of the leaf of the chestnut and the ash. A patter was heard among the leaves. There she goes—a hare! Joseph said, and a moment afterwards a white thing appeared. A white weasel, Azariah said. Shall we follow him? Joseph asked, and Azariah answered

that it would be useless to follow. We should soon miss them in the thickets. And he continued his discourse upon trees, hoping that Joseph would never again mistake a sycamore for a chestnut. And what is that tree so dark and gloomy rising up through all the other trees, Joseph asked, so much higher than any of them? That is a cedar, Azariah said. Do doves build in cedars? Azariah did not know, and the tree did not inspire a climb: it seemed to forbid any attempt on its privacy. Do trees talk when they are alone? Joseph asked Azariah, and his preceptor gave the very sensible answer that the life of trees is unknown to us. . . .

From *The Brook Kerith*.

MARY E. COLERIDGE

THE COMING OF THE MESSENGER

FOUR horses, saddled and bridled, stood ready.

Four loaded pistols lay on the table.

A. had a book in his hand, but he was not reading.

B. was writing a letter, but the regular scratching of his pen had ceased some time before.

C., with his hands in his pockets, was trying to sit listlessly before the fire, but he was not sitting listlessly.

D. had thrown himself on to the sofa and closed his eyes, but he was not asleep.

Very lightly and slightly, apologetically, as it were, because his ears were tired of long listening with nothing to listen to, B. began to whistle a tune from 'Thetis and Peleus.'

'Be quiet, cannot you?' D. said angrily.

And B. took up his pen again, while the speaker shut

his eyes in the resolute manner of a person who *will* not remain awake.

‘The slow ticking of the clock seemed to each one of them like the beating of a hammer on a bare nerve.

Yet, when at length it struck eleven, three out of the four started, for there is nothing so sudden as the arrival of a long-expected moment. In the interval between the first stroke and the eleventh, each man saw sharply defined before him a different picture—different and yet the same. Each man beheld two figures—one dead, one living. The dead man was the same in all the pictures; the living man, who stood over him, varied.

A. saw this picture on the open page of his book, B. on the blank sheet of letter-paper before him, C. in the glowing embers, D. on his own eyelids.

When the last vibration of the last stroke had died away, the silence settled down again more leadenly than before. Three out of the four men began to wonder where they would be this time to-morrow.

‘It will not do,’ said B. abruptly. ‘He ought to keep time.’

‘He will keep time,’ said A.

‘Hark!’

D. started up and curled his hand over his ear.

‘What?’

‘Hush! It’s coming nearer.’

‘Thank heaven!’ cried B.

‘You left the gate open?’

‘Yes.’

‘And there are lights in the avenue?’

‘Yes, yes.’

‘Unbar the door, somebody!’

D. ran to do so. The cold, keen, peaceful stillness of the air without refreshed him after the full, feverish atmosphere in which he had been breathing. But there was no sound.

He waited a second or two, and then, oddly frightened lest he should be the first to hear what they were all waiting for, he shut the door again and rejoined his comrades.

'A false alarm!' muttered A. 'I thought so.'

'I tell you I will bear this no longer,' cried B., after another interval of palpitating dumbness. 'A man's nerves won't stand it. I am no coward, I hope, but I tell you fairly, A., the thing is not possible. If he is to be shot, in Heaven's name challenge the poor young fellow, and do it decently! No adversary of yours has ever been known to escape. This is too much like murder for my taste.'

'It is murder,' said A. coolly. 'There is always a certain element of chance in a duel. I have never fallen, but I might fall; and the fate of my companions demands that I should not fall—yet. Murder, if managed well, is certain. What right have you to object to murder? May I ask you to recollect your oath?'

'You forget that I am a gentleman,' cried B. hotly.

'You yourself have no right to remember it. You have vowed to the gentlemen of your country not only all you have, but all you are. It is of the utmost importance to those whom you represent, that the King should not receive the message, whatever it may be, which this young man carries. Messages to the King by his special messenger are never written; they are—I thought you knew this—transmitted by word of mouth. Therefore, as we cannot take the despatches from him, nothing but

his treachery or his death can avail us; and he comes of too good a stock to turn traitor.'

'Why not imprison him?'

A. gave a short laugh.

'Where is the prison?' he said. 'Find that, and we will make a prisoner of him by all means! This house is ours for to-night only. There is no other that we can claim within fifty miles. Where is the prison?'

B. dropped his head upon his hands and made no answer.

'Why not fire on him in the open?' suggested D. 'It would be easier. He would have no more chance of escape, practically speaking, than here, between four walls, he being defenceless and we leagued together against him. Bah! you may say what you like, A., but I am of B.'s opinion; it smacks too much of common murder. We shall never fire steadily.'

'It is not to be risked,' said A.

'Why?'

'Because I say so.'

D. was silent.

'Tis an abominable business,' muttered C. 'Of all the accursed courtiers, why choose the only one that's worth his salt?'

A. turned on him fiercely.

'Because he is the only one likely to thwart our aim. The others are but a pack of cards; he has the mettle of a hero. Adonis has found it out too; he showers his favours upon him. He knows when a fish is worth catching.'

'So do you, for the matter of that; only you bait your hook with fear, not with favour,' said C. 'There's an extraordinary fascination about fear. I fear nothing in

this world that I am aware of, A., except yourself; and I follow you because I am afraid of you and would rather be afraid of you than in love with another.' •

A. nodded his head.

'You do well,' said he. 'The fear of me will carry you farther than the love of anyone else. I am doomed. I go straight as a cannon-ball to the mark.'

'Are you sure he will come to the house to-night?' asked B. 'He might go on. He has but five miles farther to ride in order to reach the village, and he may think that he can do his errand here to-morrow, and still rejoin the King in time. In that case——'

'We shall hear him galloping past the gate; we shall mount and follow. Every objection has been foreseen and answered, as you are, by this time, aware; else I should not have allowed this conversation to proceed. The horses are standing ready, but I am much mistaken, or they do not leave the stables to-night. There he is!'

The last words were spoken as quietly as all the rest.

The three accomplices sprang forward.

A. raised his hand deprecatingly.

'Be seated, gentlemen!' he said, in a tone which had the effect of physical force. 'Let the groom open the door. Do you not see that, if one of us went out to meet him, he might hand in the letter without dismounting? It is our object to decoy him into this room. When he enters, bow to him, but take no further notice. The shutters are bolted. While I am speaking, C. will lock the door and secure the key. I shall try to get him into the garden. If it can be done there, so much the better. If not, the business must be finished here. Remember that no one sees whose shot it is which takes effect.

Have you your weapons? Good! When you hear me say *The King*, fire!

In a second the pistols had vanished from the table.

D. was asleep again upon the sofa.

B. was writing as if he were writing for a wager.

C. sat before the fire, the picture of indolent reverie.

The galloping hoofs came nearer, the sound grew louder and louder, and stopped short suddenly just outside.

There was a thundering knock on the door.

From *The King with Two Faces*.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

THE GOLDFISH

AT last Amarabat stood in the presence, and the Khalifa, sitting upon a pile of cushions playing with a Waterbury watch, a pistol, and a Koran by his side, addressed him thus:

'Amarabat, son of Bjorma, my purpose is to send thee to Tafilet, where our liege lord the Sultan lies with his camp. Look upon this glass bowl made by the Kaffir, but clear as is the crystal of the rock; see how the light falls on the water, and the shifting colours that it makes, as when the Bride of the Rain stands in the heavens, after a shower in spring. Inside are seven goldfish, each scale as bright as letters in an Indian book. The Christian from whom I bought them said originally they came from the Far East where the Djin-descended Jawi live, the little yellow people of the faith. That may be, but such as they are, they are a gift for kings. Therefore, take thou the bowl. Take it with care, and bear it as it were thy life. Stay not, but in an hour start from the

town. Delay not on the road, be careful of the fish, change not their water at the muddy pool where tortoises bask in the sunshine, but at running brooks; talk not to friends, look not upon the face of woman by the way, although she were as a gazelle, or as the maiden whom when she walked through the fields the sheep stopped feeding to admire. Stop not, but run through day and night, pass through the Atlas at the Glaui; beware of frost, cover the bowl with thine own haik¹; upon the other side shield me the bowl from the Saharan sun, and drink not of the water if thou pass a day athirst when toiling through the sand. Break not the bowl, and see the fish arrive in Tafilet, and then present them, with this letter, to our lord. Allah be with you, and his Prophet; go, and above all things see thou breakest not the bowl.' And Amarabat, after the manner of his kind, taking the bowl of goldfish, placed one hand upon his heart and said: 'Inshallah, it shall be as thou hast said. God gives the feet and lungs. He also gives the luck upon the road.' . . .

And so he took his way along the winding Atlas paths, and slept at Demnats, then, entering the mountains, met long trains of travellers going to the south. Passing through groves of chestnuts, walnut-trees, and hedges thick with blackberries and travellers' joy, he climbed through vineyards rich with black Atlas grapes, and passed the flat mud-built Berber villages nestling against the rocks. Eagles flew by and moufflons gazed at him from the peaks, and from the thickets of lentiscus and dwarf arbutus wild boars appeared, grunted, and slowly walked

¹ An oblong piece of cloth which an Arab wraps round his head and body.

across the path, and still he climbed, the icy wind blew from off the snow chilling him in his cotton shirt, for his warm Tadla haik was long ago wrapped round the bowl to shield the precious fish. Crossing the Wad Ghadat, the current to his chin, his bowl of fish held in one hand, he struggled on. The Berber tribesmen at Tetsula and Zarkten, hard-featured, shaved but for a chin-tuft, and robed in their 'achnifs'¹ with the curious eye woven in the skirt, saw he was a 'rekass,'² or thought the fish not worth their notice, so gave him a free road. Night caught him at the stone-built antediluvian-looking Kasbah of the Glaui, perched in the eye of the pass, with the small plain of Teluet two thousand feet below. Off the high snow-peaks came a whistling wind, water froze solid in all the pots and pans, earthenware jars and bottles throughout the castle, save in the bowl which Amarabat, shivering and miserable, wrapped in his haik and held close to the embers, hearing the muezzin³ at each call to prayers; praying himself to keep awake so that his fish might live. Dawn saw him on the trail, the bowl wrapped in a woollen rag, and the fish fed with bread-crumbs, but himself hungry and his head swimming with want of sleep, with smoking 'kief,'⁴ and with the bitter wind which from El Tisi N'Glaui flagellates the road. Right through the valley of Teluet he still kept on, and day and night still trotting, trotting on, changing his bowl almost instinctively from hand to hand, a broad leaf floating on the top to keep the water still, he left Agurzga, with its twin castles Ghresat and Dads, behind. Then rapidly descending, in a day reached an oasis between

¹ Cloaks of sheep-skin or wool.

² Messenger.

³ The public crier proclaiming the hours of prayer.

⁴ Hashish, tobacco made from hemp-leaves.

Todghra and Ferkla, and rested at a village for the night. Sheltered by palm-trees and hedged round with cactuses and aloes, either to keep out thieves or as a symbol of the thorniness of life, the village lay, looking back on the white Atlas gaunt and mysterious, and on the other side towards the brown Sahara, land of the palm-tree (Belad-el-Jerid), the refuge of the true Ishmaelite; for in the desert, learning, good faith, and hospitality can still be found—at least, so Arabs say.

Orange and azofaifa trees, with almonds, sweet limes and walnuts, stood up against the waning light, outlined in the clear atmosphere almost so sharply as to wound the eye. Around the well goats and sheep lay, whilst a girl led a camel round the Noria track; women sat here and there and gossiped, with their tall earthenware jars stuck by the point into the ground, and waited for their turn, just as they did in the old times, so far removed from us, but which in Arab life is but as yesterday, when Jacob cheated Esau, and the whole scheme of Arab life was photographed for us by the writers of the Pentateuch. In fact, the selfsame scene which has been acted every evening for two thousand years throughout North Africa, since the adventurous ancestors of the tribesmen of to-day left Hadrumut or Yemen, and upon which Allah looks down approvingly, as recognizing that the traditions of his first recorded life have been well kept. Next day he trotted through the barren plain of Seddat, the Jibel Saghra making a black line on the horizon to the south. Here Berber tribes sweep in their razzias like hawks; but who would plunder a rekass carrying a bowl of fish? Crossing the dreary plain and dreaming of his entry into Tafilet, which now was almost in his reach not two days distant, the sun beating on his head, the water almost

boiling in the bowl, hungry and footsore, and in the state betwixt waking and sleep into which those who smoke hemp on journeys often get, he branched away upon a trail leading towards the south. Between the oases of Todghra and Ferkla, nothing but stone and sand, black stones on yellow sand; sand, and yet more sand, and then again stretches of blackish rocks with a suddra bush or two, and here and there a colocynth, bitter and beautiful as love or life, smiling up at the traveller from amongst the stones. Towards mid-day the path led towards a sandy tract all overgrown with sandrac bushes and crossed by trails of jackals and hyenas, then it quite disappeared, and Amarabat waking from his dream saw he was lost. Like a good shepherd, his first thought was for his fish; for he imagined the last few hours of sun had made them faint, and one of them looked heavy and swam sideways, and the rest kept rising to the surface in an uneasy way. Not for a moment was Amarabat frightened, but looked about for some known landmark, and finding none, started to go back on his trail. But to his horror the wind which always sweeps across the Sahara had covered up his tracks, and on the stony paths which he had passed his feet had left no prints. Then Amarabat, the first moments of despair passed by, took a long look at the horizon, tightened his belt, pulled up his slipper heels, covered his precious bowl with a corner of his robe, and started doggedly back upon the road he thought he traversed on the deceitful path. How long he trotted, what he endured, whether the fish died first, or if he drank, or, faithful to the last, thirsting met death, no one can say. Most likely wandering in the waste of sandhills and of suddra bushes he stumbled on, smoking his hashish while it lasted, turning to Mecca at the time of prayer, and

trotting on more feebly (for he was born to run), till he sat down beneath the sun-dried bushes where the Shinghit i on his Mehari found him dead beside the trail.

From Thirteen Stories.

ARNOLD BENNETT

BUYING SHAKSPEARE

THE shop had one window in King's Cross Road, but the entrance, with another window, was in Riceyman Steps. The King's Cross Road window held only cheap editions, in their paper jackets, of popular modern novels, such as those of Ethel M. Dell, Charles Garvice, Zane Grey, Florence Barclay, Nat Gould and Gene Stratton Porter. The side window was set out with old books, first editions, illustrated editions, and complete library editions in calf or morocco of renowned and serious writers, whose works, indispensable to the collections of self-respecting book-gentlemen (as distinguished from bookmen), have passed through decades of criticism into the impregnable paradise of eternal esteem. The side window was bound to attract the attention of collectors and bibliomaniacs. It seemed strangely, even fatally, out of place in that dingy and sordid neighbourhood where existence was a dangerous and difficult adventure in almost frantic quest of food, drink and shelter, where the familiar and beloved landmarks were public-houses, and where the immense majority of the population read nothing but sporting prognostications and results. . . .

Nevertheless, the shop was, in fact, well placed in Riceyman Steps. It had a picturesque air, and Riceyman Steps also had a picturesque air, with all its outworn

shabbiness, grime and decay. The steps leading up to Riceyman Square, the glimpse of the Square at the top, with its church bearing a massive cross on the west front, the curious perpendicular effects of the tall, blind, ochreish houses—all these touched the imagination of every man who had in his composition any unusually strong admixture of the universal human passion—love of the past. The shop reinforced the appeal of its environment. The shop was in its right appropriate place. To the secret race of collectors always ravenously desiring to get something for much less than its real value, the window in Riceyman Steps was irresistible. And all manner of people, including book-collectors, passed along King's Cross Road in the course of a day. And all the collectors upon catching sight of the shop exclaimed in their hearts: 'What a queer spot for a bookshop! Bargains!' Moreover, the business was of old date, and therefore had firmly established connexions quite extra-local. Scores of knowing persons knew about it, and were proud of their knowledge. 'What!' they would say with affected surprise to acquaintances of their own tastes. 'You don't know Riceyman Steps, King's Cross Road? Best hunting-ground in London!' The name 'Riceyman' on a signboard, whose paint had been flaking off for twenty years, also enhanced the prestige of the shop, for it proved ancient local associations. Riceyman must be of the true ancient blood of Clerkenwell.

The customer, with his hands behind him and his legs somewhat apart, was staring at a case of calf-bindings. A short, carefully dressed man, dapper and alert, he had the air neither of a bookman nor of a member of the upper-middle class.

'Sorry to keep you waiting. I just had to slip out, and

I've nobody else here,' said the bookseller quietly and courteously, but with no trace of obsequiousness.

'Not at all!' replied the customer. 'I was very interested in the books here.'

The bookseller, like many shopkeepers a fairly sure judge of people, perceived instantly that the customer must have acquired deportment from somewhere after adolescence, together with the art of dressing. There was abruptness in his voice, and the fact was that he had learnt manners above his original station in a strange place—Palestine, under Allenby.

'I suppose you haven't got such a thing as a Shakspeare in stock; I mean a pretty good one?'

'What sort of a Shakspeare? I've got a number of Shaksperes.'

'Well, I don't quite know. . . . I've been thinking for a long time I ought to have a Shakspeare.'

'Illustrated?' asked the bookseller, who had now accurately summed up his client as one who might know something of the world, but who was a simpleton in regard to books.

'I really haven't thought.' The customer gave a slight good-humoured snigger. 'I suppose it would be nice to have pictures to look at.'

'I have a good clean Boydell, and a Dalziel. But perhaps they'd be rather big.'

'Um!'

'You can't hold them, except on a desk or on your knee.'

'Ah! That wouldn't do! Oh, not at all!' The customer, who was nonplussed by the names mentioned, snatched at the opportunity given to decline them.

'I've got a nice little edition in eight volumes, very

handy, with outline drawings by Flaxman, and nicely printed. You don't often see it. Not like any other Shakspeare I know of. Quite cheap too.'

'Um!'

'I'll see if I can put my hand on it.'

The shop was full of bays formed by bookshelves protruding at right-angles from the walls. The first bay was well lighted and tidy; but the others, as they receded into the gloomy backward of the shop, were darker and darker and untidier and untidier. The effect was of mysterious and vast populations of books imprisoned for ever in everlasting shade, chained, deprived of air and sun and movement, hopeless, resigned, martyred. The bookseller stepped over piles of cast books into the farthest bay, which was carpeted a foot thick with a disorder of volumes, and lighted a candle.

'You don't use the electric light in that corner,' said the client, briskly following. He pointed to a dust-covered lamp in the grimy ceiling.

'Fuse gone. They do go,' the bookseller answered blandly; and the blandness was not in the least impaired by his private thought that the customer's remark came near to impudence. Searching, he went on: 'We're not quite straight here yet. The truth is, we haven't been straight since 1914.'

'Dear me! Five years!'

Another piece of good-humoured cheek.

'I suppose you couldn't step in to-morrow?' the bookseller suggested, after considerable groping and spilling of tallow.

'Afraid not,' said the customer with polite reluctance.

'Very busy . . . I was just passing and it struck me.'

'The Globe edition is very good you know . . . Stan-

dard text. Macmillans. Nothing better *of the sort*. I could sell you that for three-and-six.'

'Sounds promising,' said the customer brightly.

The bookseller blew out the candle and dusted one hand with the other.

'Of course it's not illustrated.'

'Oh, well, after all, a Shakspeare's for *reading*, isn't it?' said the customer, for whom Shakspeare was a volume, not a man.

From *Riceman Steps*.

WALTER DE LA MARE

THE RAILWAY JOURNEY

FORTUNATELY Pollie and I found ourselves in an empty carriage. The scream of the whistle, the grinding jar of the wheels, the oppressive odour of Mr. Waggett's bouquet—I leaned back on her to recover my wits. But the cool air blowing in on my face and a far-away sniff from a little glass bottle with which my mother had fortified her for the journey, quickly revived me, and I was free to enjoy the novelties of steam-travel. My eyes dizzied at the wide revolving scene that was now spread out beneath the feathery vapours. How strange it was to see the green country world—meadow and stream and wooded hill—thus wheel softly by. If Pollie and I could have shared it alone, it would have been among my pleasantest memories.

But at the next stopping places other passengers climbed into the carriage; and five complete strangers soon shared the grained wood box in which we were enclosed. There was a lady in black, with her hair smoothed up under

her bonnet, and a long pale nose; and up against her sat her little boy, a fine, fair, staring child of about five years of age. A black-clothed, fat little man with a rusty leather bag, over the lock of which he kept clasped his finger and thumb, quietly seated himself. He cast but one dark glance about him and immediately shut his eyes. In the corner was an older man with a beard under his chin, gaiters, and a hard, wide-brimmed hat. Besides these, there was a fat countrywoman on the same side as Pollie and I, whom I could hear breathing and could not see, and a dried-up, bird-eyed woman opposite in a check shawl, with heavy metal ear-rings dangling at her ears. She sat staring blankly and bleakly at things close as if they were at a distance.

My spirit drank in this company. So rapt was I that I might have been a stock of wood. Gathered together in this small space they had the appearance of animals, and, if they had not been human, what very alarming ones. As long as I merely sat and watched their habits I remained unnoticed. But the afternoon sun streamed hot on roof and windows: and the confined air was soon so dense with a variety of odours, that once more my brain dizzied, and I must clutch at Pollie's arm for support. At this movement the little boy, who had more than once furtively glanced at me, crouched wriggling back against his mother, and, edging his face aside, piped up into her ear, 'Mamma, is that alive?'

The train now stood motionless, a fine array of holly-hocks and sunflowers flared beyond the window, and his voice rang out shrill as a bird in the quiet of afternoon. Tiny points of heat broke out all over me, as one by one my fellow-passengers turned their astonished faces in my direction. Even the man with the leather bag heard the

question. The small, bead-brown eyes wheeled from under their white lids and fixed me with their stare.

'Hush, my dear,' said the lady, no less intent but less open in her survey; 'hush, look at the pretty cows!'

'But she *is*, mamma. It moved. I saw that move,' he asseverated, looking along cornerwise at me out of his up-tilted face.

Those blue eyes!—a mingling of delight, horror, incredulity, even greed swam in their shallow deeps. I stood leaning close to Pollie's bosom, breathless and helpless, a fascinating object, no doubt. Never before had I been transfixed like this in one congregated stare. I felt myself gasp like a fish. It was the old farmer in the corner who at last came to my rescue. 'Alive! *I* warrant. Eh, ma'am?' he appealed to poor Pollie. 'And an uncommon neat-fashioned young lady, too. Off to Whipham Fair, I'll be bound.'

The bagman turned with a creeping grin on his tallowy features and muttered some inaudible jest out of the corner of his mouth to the gipsy. She eyed him fiercely, drawing her lips from her bright teeth in a grimace more of contempt than laughter. Once more the engine hooted and we glided on our way.

'*I want* that, mamma,' whispered the child. '*I want* that dear little lady. Give that teeny, tiny lady a biscuit.'

At this new sally universal merriment filled the carriage. We were jogging along in fine style. This, then, was Miss Fenne's 'network.' A helpless misery and bitterness swept through me, the heavy air swirled; and then—whence, from whom, I know not—self-possession returned to me. Why, I had *chosen* my fate: I must hold my own.

My young admirer, much against his mother's inclin-

ation, had managed to fetch out a biscuit from her reticule—a star-shaped thing, graced with a cone of rose-tinted sugar. Still crouching back like a chick under her wing, he stretched his bribe out at arm's length towards me, in a pink, sweat-sparked hand. All this while Pollie had sat like a lump beside me, clutching her basket, a vacant, flushed smile on her round face. I drew myself up, and supporting myself by her wicker basket, advanced with all the dignity at my command to the peak of her knees, and, stretching out my hand in return, accepted the gift. I even managed to make him an indulgent little bow, feigned a nibble at the lump of food, then planted it on the dusty ledge beneath the carriage window.

A peculiar silence followed. With a long sigh the child hid his face in his mother's sleeve. She drew him closer and smiled carefully into nothingness. 'There,' she murmured, 'now mother's treasure must sit still and be a good boy. I can't think why papa didn't take—second-class tickets.'

'But nor did that kind little lady's papa,' returned the child stoutly.

The kindly old farmer continued to gloat on me, gnarled hands on knees. But I could not bear it. I quietly surveyed him until he was compelled to rub his face with his fingers, and so cover its retreat to his own window. The gipsy woman kept her ferocious, bird-like stare on me, with an occasional stealthy glance at Pollie. The bagman's lids closed down. For the rest of the journey—though passengers came and went—I kept well back, and was left in peace. It was my first real taste of the world's curiosity, mockery, aversion, and flattery. One practical lesson it taught me. From that day forward I never set out on any such journey unless

thickly veiled. For then, though the inquisitive may see me, they cannot tell whether or not I see them, or what my feelings may be. It is a real comfort; though, from what I have read, it appears to be the condition rather of a ghost than of a normal young lady.

But now the sun had begun to descend and the rays of evening to stain the fields. We loitered on from station to station. To my relief Pollie had at last munched her way through the pastries and sweetmeats stowed in her basket. My nosegay of cherry-pie was fainting for want of water. In heavy sleep the bagman and gipsy sat woodenly nodding and jerking side by side. The lady had delicately composed her face and shut her eyes. The little boy slumbered serenely with his small red mouth wide open. Languid and heavy, I dared not relax my vigilance. But in the desolation that gathered over me I almost forgot my human company, and returned to the empty house which seemingly I had left for ever—the shadows of yet another nightfall already lengthening over its flowers and sward.

Could I not hear the silken rustle of the evening primrose unfolding her petals? Soon the cool dews would be falling on the stones where I was wont to sit in reverie beside the flowing water. It seemed indeed that my self had slipped from my body, and hovered entranced amid the thousand jargonings of its tangled lullaby. Was there, in truth, a wraith in me that could so steal out; and were the invisible inhabitants in their fortresses beside my stream conscious of its presence among them, and as happy in my spectral company as I in theirs?

I floated up out of these ruminations to find that my young pasha had softly awakened and was gazing at me in utter incredulity from sleep-gilded eyes. We exchanged

a still, protracted, dwelling smile, and for the only time in my life I actually *saw* a fellow-creature fall in love!

'Oh, but mamma, mamma, I do *beseech* you,' he called up at her from the platform where he was taking his last look at me through the dingy oblong window, 'please, please, I want her for mine; I want her for mine!'

I held up his biscuit in my hand, laughing and nodding. The whistle knelled, our narrow box drew slowly out of the station. As if heartbroken, he took his last look at me, petulantly flinging aside his mother's hand. He had lost me for ever, and Pollie and I were alone again.

From *The Memoirs of a Midget*.

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

THE SHEPHERD

TOWARDS the end of February there was a period of intense cold, and some heavy falls of snow. Snow was rare in that south-east corner, and all farm-work was to a certain extent dislocated. Reuben would have liked to spread blankets over his corn-fields and put shirts on his cattle. Adverse weather conditions never failed to stir up his inborn combativeness to its fiercest. His sons trembled as his brain raged with body-racking plans for fighting this new move of Nature's. Richard was glad to be away from farmyard exertions, most of which struck him as absurd. He was now busy with the last of his lambing, and snow blew against the hut from the north-east, piling itself till nothing was to be seen from that quarter but a white lump. Inside was a crimson stuffiness, as the fumes of the brazier found their way slowly out of

the little tin chimney. Sometimes before the brazier a motherless lamb would lie.

There was a lamb there on the last evening in February, its tiny body and long, weak legs all rosed over with the glow. Above it Richard crouched, grammar in hand. There had been a lull in the snow-storm during the afternoon, but now once more the wind was piping and screaming over the fields and the whiteness heaping itself against the wall.

Suddenly he heard a knock at the door, and before he could answer it flew open, and an icy blast, laden with snow, rushed in and whirled round the hut, fluttering the pages of Lilly's grammar and the fleece of the lamb.

'Shut that door!' cried Richard angrily, and then realized that he was speaking to a lady.

She had shut the door, and stood against it—a tall, rather commanding figure, in spite of her snow-covered garments and dishevelled hair.

'Oh—ma'am!' said Richard, rising to his feet, and recognizing Miss Anne Bardon.

'I trust I am not in the way,' she said rather coldly; 'but the storm is so violent, and the drifts are forming so fast, that I hope you will not mind my sheltering here.'

Richard was embarrassed. Her fine words disconcerted him. He had often watched Miss Bardon from a respectful distance, but had never spoken to her before.

'You're welcome, ma'am,' he replied awkwardly, and offered her his chair.

She sat down and held her feet to the brazier. He noticed that her shoes were pulped with wet, and the water was pouring off her skirts to the floor. He did not dare speak, and she evidently did not want to. He

felt the colour mounting to his face; and he knew that he was dirty and unkempt, for he had been hours in the hut—his hands were grimed from the brazier, and he wore an old crumpled slop. She probably despised him.

Suddenly he noticed that the wet of her garments was dropping on the lamb. He hastily gathered it up in his arms.

‘What a dear little creature!’

She spoke quite graciously, and Richard felt his spirits revive.

‘His mother’s dead, and I have to be looking after him, surely.’

‘Poor little thing!’

She asked him a few questions about the lambing, then:

‘You’re one of Mr. Backfield’s sons, are you not?’

‘Yes, ma’am. I’m Richard.’

‘I’ve seen you before—in church, I think. Are you your father’s shepherd?’

‘Yes, ma’am.’

‘Again I hope I am not in your way. I’ve been over to see the carter’s widow at Socknersh—he died two days ago, you know, and she hasn’t a penny to go on with. Then when I saw the storm coming I thought I would take a short cut home across the fields; I was caught after all—and here I am!’

She smiled suddenly as she finished speaking. It was a sweet smile, rather aloof, but lighting up the whole of her face with a sudden flash of youth and kindness. Richard gazed at her, half fascinated, and mumbled lamely—‘You’re welcome, ma’am.’

She suddenly caught sight of his Latin grammar.

‘That’s a strange thing to see in a shepherd’s hand.’

He felt encouraged, for he had wanted her to see the difference between him and an ordinary shepherd, but had been too awkward to show her.

'I've had it three months—I can construe a bit of Horace now.'

'*Aequam memento rebus in arduis servare mentem*,'¹ said Anne.

'*Omnes eodem cogimur*,'² said Richard, and blushed.

There was a silence, but not of the former discouraging sort. Richard was even bold enough to break it:

'I never knew ladies cud speak Latin.'

'Some can. I was educated with my brother, you know, and when we construed Horace I was always five or six pages ahead. What made you want to learn Latin?'

'I want to git out o' this.'

'Out of your farm duties, you mean?'

'Yes.'

'But surely your father would let you adopt some other profession if he knew you did not like this one?'

Richard shook his head.

'He wants justabout all of us—we've got to push on the farm.'

'Yes—I know he is ambitious, but surely he doesn't want unwilling helpers.'

'Oh, he döan't mind who it is, so long as the work's done.'

'And don't you care about the farm?'

'I, ma'am?—no. I want to be a gentleman.'

Anne was growing interested. This farm boy was gloriously unlike others of his kind that she had met.

¹ Remember in difficulties to keep a level head.

² We are all driven the same way.

'And you think that if you learn Latin it'll help you to be a gentleman some day?'

'Yes—and Greek, when I've adone wud the Latin.'

'Have you many books?'

'No—only this one.'

'Then I must lend you some books.'

Richard flushed with pleasure. After all he was not acquitting himself so badly with this fine lady. They talked together for a few more minutes, the boy trying to clip his speech like hers. He noticed how much shorter and crisper it was than his—while he said 'döan't,' she could say 'don't' twice.

They were interrupted by the entrance of the Doozes shepherd, accompanied by a swirl of flakeless wind. The old man was astonished and rather scandalized to find Anne Bardon. She looked positively rakish sitting there in her steaming clothes, her hat over one ear, her hair in wisps, and her face more animated and girlish than any of his kind had ever seen it.

Old Comfort scraped and mumbled, and fussed over the lamb, which the two Latinists had entirely forgotten. Then Richard, seeing himself free and the sky clear, offered to help her through the drifts to Flightshot. She let him accompany her as far as the edge of the Manor estate, where the going was no longer dangerous.

'Your servant, ma'am,' he said, as he opened the gate; and she answered classically:

'*Vale!*'¹

From *Sussex Gorse*.

¹ Good-bye.

MARY CROSBIE

THE BONFIRE

THE Colonel, bent over his stick, was climbing slowly. He stopped every few yards, and the shawled figure by his side, whose movement was lighter than his, stopped too, and looked back over the way they had come, as though curiosity, not fatigue, made her pause.

'By gum! T'owd lady! Eh, she's a game 'un!'

A chorus of admiration joined. Even the schoolmaster cried 'Fancy that now!' in a friendly tone. Only Winstanley was silent, rolling a cigarette and looking down on the two brave old people without interest. Caroline had a heave of hatred; would have had him whipped, if whipping were in fashion, for spoiling the procession of his betters.

The Colonel, tall, white-haired, hook-nosed, his back straight at seventy-five, could be taken as the type of pure breeding, but that his wife carried type into the region where it becomes symbol. Slender and invincible, graceful and gracious, ivory pale above black silk and old lace, she gave it a romantic perfection.

The Colonel leaned on a stout stick, she on an ebony cane. They had had a slow climb of over half a mile since they left the car that brought them to the point where the road lost all claim to be called a road. It was cold up here, but the two old people defied chills and rheumatism, because they felt an inner fire. Young Winstanley should have applauded. But his face showed nothing save a cold interest in his cigarette. Caroline went to meet them with her head up. She thought it irritating of them to insist on straining their arteries in this

fashion, but she meant to protect them from young Winstanley.

The Colonel admitted he was blown. He sat down on a boulder to get his breath, and the little group parted to discover another stone on which Lady Augusta might sit. They might have been offering a chair in the parlour.

'Thank you, no.' She stood very erect by her husband. She looked up at the beacon, above which a star flickered, and her pale face was sweet and ghostly in the twilight. 'You've done it beautifully. It will be seen as far as Lancrigg. When the Colonel has rested a moment——'

'I'm all right,' said the Colonel. 'In a minute—fuff-f——' He went on saying he was all right, but he sat on the rock for several more minutes. 'By George ! It's a beauty ! Whose idea was it to twist the twigs like that? Willie's? Good for you, Willie. Hullo, Ramsden!—what are you doing here? You're not a young chap like me, you know.'

He was putting on time and getting his breath. The man laughed at his little joke. Caroline laughed, too, though she was half angry with him for puffing and panting. Old Willie, fussily pushing in an extra stick here and opening up an air passage there, bade someone kindle a bit of resiny pine for the Colonel. Even in giving the order he could not forbear from cuffing a lad for trying to obey it, and taking a bit of wood he fancied from slow-moving Joe Varley. He was still striking matches on the seat of his trousers and swearing under his breath at the dampness of both, when he saw young Winstanley hand the Colonel a fine flaring brand. Willie swore again, a little louder.

The Colonel got up stiffly and thrust the torch in among the piled wood. Some of the lighter twigs were

twined with wool where sheep had rubbed against them months ago. The wool lit in an uncertain sprinkle of fire, and a rank goat-like smell rose before the sharper wood-smoke.

'Too much oak! It won't light!'

'Howd tha din, Giles Winstanley. Tha knaws too much. Happen some of us've forgetted more than tha iver knowed.'

The men laughed, and the Colonel laughed, to see young Winstanley put down. Caroline did not laugh. She shot a look at him, hoping to find him abashed, but he was lighting a cigarette from a bit of paper lit at the fire; a bold, cold thing to do. It angered the Colonel's granddaughter, but also it gave her a crisped feeling that was sharp and pleasant.

The fire began to blow, like wind, among the dead branches and to creep round the heavier wood. There was a rustle as though leaves or ghosts of leaves were astir. Dusk came up the hill. In the valley it was thick. Away in the west a slab of slaty darkness reared itself against the sky, but over it the day still shone.

The Colonel took off his cap as if he were at prayer, and the men round stood intent on a victim that lay bound among the faggots. For a moment even the children were silent, staring at the whispering fire. The old lady's bright, hard face made her look like a small archangel.

The fire sprang into space, burning out the stars. It blew into wide flames and made a noise like birds in flight. The children cried out and ran for little useless sticks to throw on it. The women stirred to go home, telling each other what they had done and said and said and done. Old Willie put on his coat, talking all the while of the right way to build a bonfire—his way. Darkness fell;

and Caroline, standing alone, like Winstanley, and, like him, silent, swung with the swinging flame. It lit in her a passion as rootless as itself that was somehow joined with the Soldier who went whistling into oblivion a century ago.

From *The Old Road*.

E. M. FORSTER

HOWARDS END

By this time it was raining steadily. The car came round with the hood up, and again she lost all sense of space. In a few minutes they stopped, and Crane opened the door of the car.

'What's happened?' asked Margaret.

'What do you suppose?' said Henry.

A little porch was close up against her face.

'Are we there already?'

'We are.'

'Well, I never! In years ago it seemed so far away.'

Smiling, but somehow disillusioned, she jumped out, and her impetus carried her to the front-door. She was about to open it when Henry said: 'That's no good; it's locked. Who's got the key?'

As he had himself forgotten to call for the key at the farm, no one replied. He also wanted to know who had left the front gate open, since a cow had strayed in from the road, and was spoiling the croquet lawn. Then he said rather crossly: 'Margaret, you wait in the dry. I'll go down for the key. It isn't a hundred yards.'

'Mayn't I come too?'

'No; I shall be back before I'm gone.'

Then the car turned away, and it was as if a curtain had risen. For the second time that day she saw the appearance of the earth.

There were the greengage-trees that Helen had once described, there the tennis lawn, there the hedge that would be glorious with dog-roses in June, but the vision now was of black and palest green. Down by the dell-hole more vivid colours were awakening, and Lent lilies stood sentinel on its margin, or advanced in battalions over the grass. Tulips were a tray of jewels. She could not see the wych-elm tree, but a branch of the celebrated vine, studded with velvet knobs, had covered the porch. She was struck by the fertility of the soil; she had seldom been in a garden where the flowers looked so well, and even the weeds she was idly plucking out of the porch were intensely green. Why had poor Mr. Bryce fled from all this beauty? For she had already decided that the place was beautiful.

'Naughty cow! Go away!' cried Margaret to the cow, but without indignation.

Harder came the rain, pouring out of a windless sky, and spattering up from the notice-boards of the house-agents, which lay in a row on the lawn where Charles had hurled them. She must have interviewed Charles in another world—where one did have interviews. How Helen would revel in such a notion! Charles dead, all people dead, nothing alive but houses and gardens. The obvious dead, the intangible alive, and—no connection at all between them! Margaret smiled. Would that her own fancies were as clear-cut! Would that she could deal as high-handedly with the world! Smiling and sighing, she laid her hand upon the door. It opened. The house was not locked up at all.

She hesitated. Ought she to wait for Henry? He felt strongly about property, and might prefer to show her over himself. On the other hand, he had told her to keep in the dry, and the porch was beginning to drip. So she went in, and the draught from inside slammed the door behind.

Desolation greeted her. Dirty finger-prints were on the hall-windows, flue and rubbish on its unwashed boards. The civilization of luggage had been here for a month, and then decamped. Dining-room and drawing-room—right and left—were guessed only by their wall-papers. They were just rooms where one could shelter from the rain. Across the ceiling of each ran a great beam. The dining-room and hall revealed theirs openly, but the drawing-room's was match-boarded—because the facts of life must be concealed from ladies? Drawing-room, dining-room, and hall—how petty the names sounded! Here were simply three rooms where children could play and friends shelter from the rain. Yes, and they were beautiful.

Then she opened one of the doors opposite—there were two—and exchanged wall-papers for whitewash. It was the servants' part, though she scarcely realized that: just rooms again, where friends might shelter. The garden at the back was full of flowering cherries and plums. Farther on were hints of the meadow and the black cliff of pines. Yes, the meadow was beautiful.

Penned in by the desolate weather, she recaptured the sense of space which the motor had tried to rob from her. She remembered again that ten square miles are not ten times as wonderful as one square mile, that a thousand square miles are not practically the same as heaven. The phantom of bigness, which London encourages, was laid

for ever when she paced from the hall at Howards End to its kitchen and heard the rains run this way and that where the watershed of the roof divided them.

Now Helen came to her mind, scrutinizing half Wessex from the ridge of the Purbeck Downs, and saying: 'You will have to lose something.' She was not so sure. For instance, she would double her kingdom by opening the door that concealed the stairs.

Now she thought of the map of Africa; of empires; of her father; of the two supreme nations, streams of whose life warmed her blood, but, mingling, had cooled her brain. She paced back into the hall, and as she did so the house reverberated.

'Is that you, Henry?' she called.

There was no answer, but the house reverberated again.

'Henry, have you got in?'

But it was the heart of the house beating, faintly at first, then loudly, martially. It dominated the rain.

It is the starved imagination, not the well-nourished, that is afraid. Margaret flung open the door to the stairs. A noise as of drums seemed to deafen her. A woman, an old woman, was descending, with figure erect, with face impassive, with lips that parted and said dryly:

'Oh! Well, I took you for Ruth Wilcox.'

Margaret stammered: 'I—Mrs. Wilcox—I?'

'In fancy, of course—in fancy. You had her way of walking. Good-day.' And the old woman passed out into the rain.

From Howards End.

WILLA CATHER

THE BELL OF SAN MIGUEL

ON the morning after the Bishop's return from Durango, after his first night in his episcopal residence, he had a pleasant awakening from sleep. He had ridden into the courtyard after nightfall, having changed horses at a *rancho*¹ and pushed on nearly sixty miles in order to reach home. Consequently he slept late the next morning—did not awaken until six o'clock, when he heard the Angelus ringing. He recovered consciousness slowly, unwilling to let go of a pleasant delusion that he was in Rome. Still half believing that he was lodged near St. John Lateran, he yet heard every stroke of the Ave Maria bell, marvelling to hear it rung correctly (nine quick strokes in all, divided into threes, with an interval between); and from a bell with beautiful tone. Full, clear, with something bland and suave, each note floated through the air like a globe of silver. Before the nine strokes were done Rome faded, and behind it he sensed something eastern, with palm trees—Jerusalem, perhaps, though he had never been there. Keeping his eyes closed, he cherished for a moment this sudden, pervasive sense of the East. Once before he had been carried out of the body thus to a place far away. It had happened in a street in New Orleans. He had turned a corner and come upon an old woman with a basket of yellow flowers; sprays of yellow sending out a honey-sweet perfume: mimosa—but before he could think of the name he ~~was~~ overcome by a feeling of place, ~~was~~ dropped, cassock and all, into a garden in the South of France where he had

¹ Farm.

been sent one winter in his childhood to recover from an illness. And now this silvery bell note had carried him farther and faster than sound could travel.

When he joined Father Vaillant at coffee, that impetuous man who could never keep a secret asked him anxiously whether he had heard anything.

'I thought I heard the Angelus, Father Joseph, but my reason tells me that only a long sea voyage could bring me within sound of such a bell.'

'Not at all,' said Father Joseph briskly. 'I found that remarkable bell here, in the basement of old San Miguel. They tell me it has been here a hundred years or more. There is no church tower in the place strong enough to hold it—it is very thick and must weigh close upon eight hundred pounds. But I had a scaffolding built in the churchyard, and with the help of oxen we raised it and got it swung on cross-beams. I taught a Mexican boy to ring it properly against your return.'

'But how could it have come here? It is Spanish, I suppose?'

'Yes, the inscription is in Spanish, to St. Joseph, and the date is 1356. It must have been brought up from Mexico City in an ox-cart. An heroic undertaking, certainly. Nobody knows where it was cast. But they do tell a story about it: that it was pledged to St. Joseph in the wars with the Moors, and that the people of some besieged city brought all their plate and silver and gold ornaments and threw them in with the baser metals. There is certainly a good deal of silver in the bell, nothing else would account for its tone.'

Father Latour reflected. 'And the silver of the Spaniards was really Moorish, was it not? If not actually of Moorish make, copied from their design. The

Spaniards knew nothing about working silver except as they learned it from the Moors.'

'What are you doing, Jean? Trying to make my bell out an infidel?' Father Joseph asked impatiently.

The Bishop smiled. 'I am trying to account for the fact that when I heard it this morning it struck me at once as something oriental. A learned Scotch Jesuit in Montreal told me that our first bells, and the introduction of the bell in the service all over Europe, originally came from the East. He said the Templars brought the Angelus back from the Crusades, and it is really an adaptation of a Moslem custom.'

Father Vaillant sniffed. 'I notice that scholars always manage to dig up something belittling,' he complained.

'Belittling? I should say the reverse. I am glad to think there is Moorish silver in your bell. When we first came here, the one good workman we found in Santa Fé was a silversmith. The Spaniards handed on their skill to the Mexicans, and the Mexicans have taught the Navajos to work silver; but it all came from the Moors.'

'I am no scholar, as you know,' said Father Vaillant, rising. 'And this morning we have many practical affairs to occupy us.'

From Death Comes for the Archbishop.

RICHARD HUGHES

THE EARTHQUAKE

THE cavalcade mounted—Emily very conscious of her boots, buttoned respectably half-way up her calf. Somebody had food, and calabashes of water. The ponies

evidently knew the way. The sun was still red and large: the sky above cloudless, and like blue glaze poured over baking clay: but close over the ground a dirty grey haze hovered. As they followed the lane towards the sea they came to a place where, yesterday, a fair-sized spring had bubbled up by the roadside. Now it was dry. But even as they passed a kind of gout of water gushed forth: and then it was dry again, although gurgling inwardly to itself. But the cavalcade were hot, far too hot to speak to one another: they sat their ponies as loosely as possible, longing for the sea.

The morning advanced. The heated air grew quite easily hotter, as if from some reserve of enormous blaze on which it could draw at will. Bullocks only shifted their stinging feet when they could bear the soil no longer: even the insects were too languorous to pipe, the basking lizards hid themselves and panted. It was so still you could have heard the least buzz a mile off. Not a naked fish would willingly move his tail. The ponies advanced because they must. The children ceased even to muse.

They all very nearly jumped out of their skins; for close at hand a crane had trumpeted once desperately. Then the broken silence closed down as flawless as before. They perspired twice as violently with the stimulus. Their pace grew slower and slower. It was no faster than a procession of snails that at last they reached the sea.

Exeter Rocks is a famous place. A bay of the sea, almost a perfect semicircle, guarded by the reef: shelving white sands to span the few feet from the water to the under-cut turf: and then, almost at the midpoint, a jutting-out shelf of rocks right into deep water—fathoms deep. And a narrow fissure in the rocks, leading the water into

a small pool, or miniature lagoon, right inside their bastion. There it was, safe from sharks or drowning, that the Fernandez children meant to soak themselves all day, like turtles in a crawl. The water of the bay was as smooth and immovable as basalt, yet clear as the finest gin: albeit the swell muttered a mile away on the reef. The water within the pool itself could not reasonably be smoother. No sea-breeze thought of stirring. No bird trespassed on the inert air.

For a while they had not energy to get into the water, but lay on their faces, looking down, down, down, at the sea-fans and sea-feathers, the scarlet-plumed barnacles and corals, the black and yellow schoolmistress-fish, the rainbow-fish—all that forest of ideal Christmas trees which is a tropical sea-bottom. Then they stood up, giddy and seeing black, and in a trice were floating suspended in water like drowned ones, only their noses above the surface, under the shadow of a rocky ledge.

An hour or so after noon they clustered together, puffy from the warm water, in the insufficient shade of a Panama fern: ate such of the food they had brought as they had appetite for; and drank all the water, wishing for more. Then a very odd thing happened: for even as they sat there they heard the most peculiar sound: a strange, rushing sound that passed overhead like a gale of wind—but not a breath of breeze stirred, that was the odd thing: followed by a sharp hissing and hurtling, like a flight of rockets, or gigantic swans—very distant rocs, perhaps—on the wing. They all looked up: but there was nothing at all. The sky was empty and lucid. Long before they were back in the water again all was still. Except that after a while John noticed a sort of tapping, as if some one were gently knocking the outside

of a bath you were in. But the bath they were in had no outside, it was solid world. It was funny.

By sunset they were so weak from long immersion they could barely stand up, and as salted as bacon; but, with some common impulse, just before the sun went down they all left the rocks and went and stood by their clothes, where the ponies were tethered, under some palms. As he sank the sun grew even larger: and instead of red was now a sodden purple. Down he went, behind the western horn of the bay, which blackened till its water-line disappeared and substance and reflection seemed one sharp symmetrical pattern.

Not a breath of breeze even yet ruffled the water: yet momentarily it trembled of its own accord, shattering the reflections: then was glassy again. On that the children held their breath, waiting for it to happen.

A school of fish, terrified by some purely submarine event, thrust their heads right out of the water, squattering across the bay in an arrowy rush, dashing up sparkling ripples with the tiny heave of their shoulders: yet after each disturbance all was soon like hardest, dark, thick, glass.

Once things vibrated slightly, like a chair in a concert-room: and again there was that mysterious winging, though there was nothing visible beneath the swollen iridescent stars.

Then it came. The water of the bay began to ebb away, as if some one had pulled up the plug: a foot or so of sand and coral gleamed for a moment new to the air: then back the sea rushed in miniature rollers which splashed right up to the feet of the palms. Mouthfuls of turf were torn away; and on the far side of the bay a small piece of cliff tumbled into the water: sand and twigs showered down, dew fell from the trees like diamonds:

birds and beasts, their tongues at last loosed, screamed and bellowed: the ponies, though quite unalarmed, lifted up their heads and yelled.

That was all: a few moments. Then silence, with a rapid countermarch, recovered all his rebellious kingdom. Stillness again. The trees moved as little as the pillars of a ruin, each leaf laid sleekly in place. The bubbling foam subsided: the reflections of the stars came out among it as if from clouds. Silent, still, dark, placid, as if there could never have been a disturbance. The naked children too continued to stand motionless beside the quiet ponies, dew on their hair and eyelashes, shine on their infantile round paunches.

But as for Emily, it was too much. The earthquake went completely to her head. She began to dance, hopping laboriously from one foot on to another. John caught the infection. He turned head over heels on the damp sand, over and over in an elliptical course, till before he knew it he was in the water, and so giddy as hardly to be able to tell up from down.

At that, Emily knew what it was she wanted to do. She scrambled on to a pony and galloped him up and down the beach, trying to bark like a dog. The Fernandez children stared, solemn but not disapproving. John, shaping a course for Cuba, was swimming as if sharks were paring his toe-nails. Emily rode her pony into the sea, and beat and beat him till he swam: and so she followed John towards the reef, yapping herself hoarse.

It must have been fully a hundred yards before they were spent. Then they turned for the shore, John holding on to Emily's leg, puffing and gasping, both a little overdone, their emotion run down.

From *A High Wind in Jamaica*.

IMAGINATIVE PROSE

H. G. WELLS

A VISION OF MARS

THE view, as Mr. Cave described it, was invariably of an extensive plain, and he seemed always to be looking at it from a considerable height, as if from a tower or a mast. To the east and to the west the plain was bounded at a remote distance by vast reddish cliffs, which reminded him of those he had seen in some picture; but what the picture was Mr. Wace was unable to ascertain. These cliffs passed north and south—he could tell the points of the compass by the stars that were visible of a night—receding in an almost illimitable perspective and fading into the mists of the distance before they met. He was nearer the eastern set of cliffs; on the occasion of his first vision the sun was rising over them, and black against the sunlight and pale against their shadow appeared a multitude of soaring forms that Mr. Cave regarded as birds. A vast range of buildings spread below him; he seemed to be looking down upon them; and as they approached the blurred and refracted edge of the picture they became indistinct. There were also trees curious in shape, and in colouring, a deep mossy green and an exquisite grey, beside a wide and shining canal. And something great and brilliantly coloured flew across the picture. But the first time Mr. Cave saw these pictures

he saw only in flashes, his hands shook, his head moved, the vision came and went, and grew foggy and indistinct. And at first he had the greatest difficulty in finding the picture again once the direction of it was lost.

His next clear vision, which came about a week after the first, the interval having yielded nothing but tantalizing glimpses and some useful experience, showed him the view down the length of the valley. The view was different, but he had a curious persuasion, which his subsequent observations abundantly confirmed, that he was regarding this strange world from exactly the same spot, although he was looking in a different direction. The long façade of the great building, whose roof he had looked down upon before, was now receding in perspective. He recognized the roof. In the front of the façade was a terrace of massive proportions and extraordinary length, and down the middle of the terrace, at certain intervals, stood huge but very graceful masts, bearing small shiny objects which reflected the setting sun. The import of these small objects did not occur to Mr. Cave until some time after, as he was describing the scene to Mr. Wace. The terrace overhung a thicket of the most luxuriant and graceful vegetation, and beyond this was a wide grassy lawn on which certain broad creatures, in form like beetles but enormously larger, reposed. Beyond this again was a richly decorated causeway of pinkish stone; and beyond that, and lined with dense *red* weeds, and passing up the valley exactly parallel with the distant cliffs, was a broad and mirror-like expanse of water. The air seemed full of squadrons of great birds, manœuvring in stately curves; and across the river was a multitude of splendid buildings, richly coloured and glittering with metallic tracery and facets, among a forest of moss-like

and lichenous trees. And suddenly something flapped repeatedly across the vision, like the fluttering of a jewelled fan or the beating of a wing, and a face, or rather the upper part of a face with very large eyes, came as it were close to his own and as if on the other side of the crystal. Mr. Cave was so startled and so impressed by the absolute reality of these eyes, that he drew his head back from the crystal to look behind it. He had become so absorbed in watching that he was quite surprised to find himself in the cool darkness of his little shop, with its familiar odour of methyl, mustiness and decay. And, as he blinked about him, the glowing crystal faded, and went out.

Such were the first general impressions of Mr. Cave. The story is curiously direct and circumstantial. From the outset, when the valley first flashed momentarily on his senses, his imagination was strangely affected, and, as he began to appreciate the details of the scene he saw, his wonder rose to the point of a passion. He went about his business listless and distraught, thinking only of the time when he should be able to return to his watching. . . .

The attention of Mr. Cave had been speedily directed to the bird-like creatures he had seen so abundantly present in each of his earlier visions. His first impression was soon corrected, and he considered for a time that they might represent a diurnal species of bat. Then he thought, grotesquely enough, that they might be cherubs. Their heads were round and curiously human, and it was the eyes of one of them that had so startled him on his second observation. They had broad, silvery wings, not feathered, but glistening almost as brilliantly as new-killed fish and with the same subtle play of colour, and these wings were not built on the plan of bird-wing

or bat, Mr. Wace learned, but supported by curved ribs radiating from the body. (A sort of butterfly wing with curved ribs seems best to express their appearance.) The body was small, but fitted with two bunches of prehensile organs, like long tentacles, immediately under the mouth. Incredible as it appeared to Mr. Wace, the persuasion at last became irresistible that it was these creatures which owned the great quasi-human buildings and magnificent garden that made the broad valley so splendid. And Mr. Cave perceived that the buildings, with other peculiarities, had no doors, but that the great circular windows, which opened freely, gave the creatures egress and entrance. They would alight upon their tentacles, fold their wings to a smallness almost rod-like, and hop into the interior. But among them was a multitude of smaller-winged creatures, like great dragon-flies and moths and flying beetles, and across the greensward brilliantly-coloured gigantic ground-beetles crawled lazily to and fro. Moreover, on the causeways and terraces, large-headed creatures similar to the greater winged flies, but wingless, were visible, hopping busily upon their hand-like tangle of tentacles.

Allusion has already been made to the glittering objects upon masts that stood upon the terrace of the nearer building. It dawned upon Mr. Cave, after regarding one of these masts very fixedly on one particularly vivid day, that the glittering object there was a crystal exactly like that into which he peered. And a still more careful scrutiny convinced him that each one in a vista of nearly twenty carried a similar object.

Occasionally one of the large flying creatures would flutter up to one, and, folding its wings and coiling a number of its tentacles about the mast, would regard the

crystal fixedly for a space—sometimes for as long as fifteen minutes. And a series of observations, made at the suggestion of Mr. Wace, convinced both watchers that, so far as this visionary world was concerned, the crystal into which they peered actually stood at the summit of the endmost mast on the terrace, and that on one occasion at least one of these inhabitants of this other world had looked into Mr. Cave's face while he was making these observations.

So much for the essential facts of this very singular story. Unless we dismiss it all as the ingenious fabrication of Mr. Wace, we have to believe one of two things: either that Mr. Cave's crystal was in two worlds at once, and that, while it was carried about in one, it remained stationary in the other, which seems altogether absurd; or else that it had some peculiar relation of sympathy with another and exactly similar crystal in this other world, so that what was seen in the interior of the one in this world was, under suitable conditions, visible to an observer in the corresponding crystal in the other world; and *vice versa*. . . .

And where was this other world? On this also, the alert intelligence of Mr. Wace speedily threw light. After sunset, the sky darkened rapidly—there was a very brief twilight interval indeed—and the stars shone out. They were recognizably the same as those we see, arranged in the same constellations. Mr. Cave recognized the Bear, the Pleiades, Aldebaran, and Sirius; so that the other world must be somewhere in the solar system, and, at the utmost, only a few hundreds of millions of miles from our own. Following up this clue, Mr. Wace learned that the midnight sky was a darker blue even than our mid-winter sky, and that the sun seemed a little smaller. *And*

there were two small moons! 'like our moon but smaller, and quite differently marked,' one of which moved so rapidly that its motion was clearly visible as one regarded it. These moons were never high in the sky, but vanished as they rose: that is, every time they revolved they were eclipsed because they were so near their primary planet. And all this answers quite completely, although Mr. Cave did not know it, to what must be the condition of things on Mars.

Indeed, it seems an exceedingly plausible conclusion that peering into this crystal Mr. Cave did actually see the planet Mars and its inhabitants. And, if that be the case, then the evening star that shone so brilliantly in the sky of that distant vision was neither more nor less than our own familiar earth.

From Tales of the Unexpected.

JAMES STEPHENS

THE ANGELS COME TO EARTH

THE day had drawn to its close. The stars had not yet come, nor the moon. Far to the west a red cloud poised on the horizon like a great whale and, moment by moment, it paled and faded until it was no more than a pink flush. On high, clouds of pearl and snow piled and fell and sailed away on easy voyages. It was the twilight—a twilight of such quietude that one could hear the soft voice of the world as it whispered through leaf and twig. There was no breeze to swing the branches of the trees or to creep among the rank grasses and set them dancing, and yet everywhere there was unceasing movement and a sound that never ceased. About them, for mile upon

mile, there was no habitation of man; there was no movement anywhere except when a bird dipped and soared in a hasty flight homewards, or when a beetle went slugging by like a tired bullet.

Mary had unharnessed the ass and bade him, with an affectionate kiss, to eat his fill. The donkey stood for a moment with his ears and tail hanging down, then he lifted both his ears and his tail, slung up his ragged head, bared his solid teeth, and brayed furiously for two minutes. That accomplished, he trotted briskly a few paces, bent to the grass, and began to eat so eagerly that one would think eating was more of a novelty to him than it could be to an ass of his years.

'The sound of that beast's voice does get on my nerves,' said Patsy.

'He has a powerful voice, sure enough, God bless him! Sit down there by the hedge and light the fire while I'm getting the things ready; the night will be on us in a few minutes and it will be a cold night.'

While she moved busily from the cart to the hedge her father employed himself lighting a fire of turf in a wrinkled bucket. When this was under way he pulled out a pipe, black as a coal, and off which half the shank was broken, and this he put into his mouth. At the moment he seemed to be sunken in thought, his eyes to the grass and his feet planted, and it was in a musing voice that he spoke:

'Do you know what I'd do, Mary, if I had a bottle of porter beside me in this field?'

'I do well,' she replied; 'you'd drink it.'

'I would so, but before I'd drink it I'd put the end of this pipe into it, for it's newly cracked, and it sticks to my lips in a way that would anger a man wanting a

smoke, and if I could stick it into the porter it would be cured. I don't suppose, now, that you have a sup of porter in the cart!

'I have not.'

She was preparing the potatoes when a remark from her father caused her to pause.

'What is it?' said she.

'It's a bird. I saw it for a second against a white piece of a cloud, and I give you my word that it's as big as a haystack. There it is again,' he continued excitedly; 'there's three of them.'

For a few minutes they followed the flight of these amazing birds, but the twilight had almost entirely departed and darkness was brooding over the land. They did not see them any more.

And yet it was but a short distance from where they camped that the angels first put foot to earth.

It is useless to question what turmoil of wind or vagary of wing brought them to this desert hill instead of to a place more worthy of their grandeur, for, indeed, they were gorgeously appalled in silken robes of scarlet and gold and purple; upon their heads were crowns high in form and of curious intricate workmanship, and their wings, stretching ten feet on either side, were of many and shining colours.

Enough that here they did land, and in this silence and darkness they stood for a few moments looking about them.

Then one spoke:

'Art,' said he, 'we were too busy coming down to look about us carefully; spring up again a little way, and see if there is any house in sight.'

At the word one of the three stepped forward a pace,

and leaped twenty feet into the air; his great wings swung out as he leaped, they beat twice, and he went circling the hill in steady, noiseless flight.

He returned in a minute:

'There are no houses here, but a little way below I saw a fire and two people sitting beside it.'

'We will talk to them,' said the other. 'Show the way, Art.'

'Up then,' said Art.

'No,' said the Angel who had not yet spoken. 'I am tired of flying. We will walk to this place you speak of.'

'Very well,' replied Art, 'let us walk.'

And they went forward.

Around the little bucket of fire where MacCann and his daughter were sitting there was an intense darkness. At the distance of six feet they could still see, but delicately, indistinctly, and beyond that the night hung like a velvet curtain. They did not mind the night, they did not fear it, they did not look at it: it was around them, full of strangeness, full of mystery and terror, but they looked only at the glowing brazier, and in the red cheer of that they were content.

They had eaten the bread and the turnip, and were waiting for the potatoes to be cooked, and as they waited an odd phrase, an exclamation, a sigh would pass from one to the other; and then, suddenly, the dark curtain of night moved noiselessly, and the three angels stepped nobly in the firelight.

For an instant neither Mac Cann nor his daughter made a movement; they did not make a sound. Here was terror, and astonishment the sister of terror: they gaped: their whole being was in their eyes as they stared. From Mac Cann's throat came a noise: it had no gram-

matical significance, but it was weighted with all the sense that is in a dog's growl or a wolf's cry. Then the youngest of the strangers came forward.

'May we sit by your fire for a little time?' said he. 'The night is cold, and in this darkness one does not know where to go.'

From *The Demi-Gods*.

HUGH WALPOLE

THE SCARLET ADMIRAL

A FUNNY old lady, named Miss Henhouse, who lived near Cow Farm, in a little cottage all by herself, called sometimes upon the Coles and told them stories about the people and the place, which made them 'sit up in their chairs.' She was an old lady with sharp eyes, a black moustache and a double chin, wore an old shabby bonnet, grey mittens and large shoes which banged after her as she walked. She leant on a cane with a silver knob to it, and she wore a huge cameo brooch on her breast with a miniature of herself inside it. She was what is called in novels 'a character.' There was no one who knew so much about Rafiel and its neighbourhood; she had lived here for ever, her father had been a friend of Wellington's and had known members of the local Press Gang intimately. It was from her that Jeremy heard, in detail, the famous story of the Scarlet Admiral. It was, of course, in any case, a well-known story, and Jeremy had often heard it before, but Miss Henhouse made it a new, a most vivid and realistic thing. She sat forward in her chair, leaning on her silver-headed cane, her eyes staring in front of her, her two chins

bobbing, gazing, gazing as though it all had happened before her very nose.

How one night outside Rafiel Cove there was a terrible storm, and on the morning afterwards a wonderful, smiling calm, and how the village idiot, out for his early morning stroll, saw a splendid ship riding beyond the Cove, a ship of gold with sails of silk and jewelled masts. As he watched, from the ship a boat pushed out, and then landed on the sand of the Cove a wonderful company in cocked hats of gold lace, plush breeches of red, and shoes with diamond buckles. The leader of them was a little man with a vast cocked hat and a splendid sword all studded with jewels. The fool, peering over the hedge, saw him give orders to his men, and then walk, alone, up the little winding path to the cliff-top. Straight up the path he came, then right past the fool himself, standing at last upon the turnip field of Farmer Ede, one of the greatest of the farmers of those parts. And here he waited, staring out to sea, his arms crossed, his eyes very fierce and very, very sad. Then a second time from the golden ship a boat pushed out, cutting its way through the glassy sea—and there landed on the beach a young man, very beautiful, in a suit of blue and gold, and he, without a glance at the waiting sailors, also slowly climbed the sea-path, and at last he too reached Farmer Ede's turnip field. Then he and the Scarlet Admiral bowed to one another, very beautifully, very sadly, and very, very fiercely. As the sun rose high in the sky, as the cows passed clumsily down the lane behind the field, so the fool, with eyes staring and heart thumping, saw these two fight a duel to the death. There could be no question, from the first, how it would end. The beautiful young man in his fine blue suit and his white cambric

shirt had despair upon his face. He knew that his hour had come. And the eyes of the Scarlet Admiral were ever sadder and ever fiercer. Then, with a sudden move, a little turn of his agile body, the Scarlet Admiral had the young man through the breast. The young man threw up his arms and cried; and, as the Scarlet Admiral withdrew his sword, dripping with blood, from his body, the young man fell backwards over the cliff into the sea. Then the Scarlet Admiral wiped his sword on the grass and, slowly and sadly, walked down the cliff-path even as he had walked up. He joined his men, they found their boat, pushed out to their ship, and even as they landed upon her she had disappeared. A moment later the fool saw the parson of Rafiel Church coming round the corner for his morning bathe, and two minutes afterwards nothing human was to be seen save the naked limbs of the parson and his little bundle of black clothes lying neatly upon a stone. Then the fool ran all the way home to his mother, who was a widow, and sat and cried and cried for the beautiful young man who had been slain, nor would he eat, nor taste the excellent Rafiel beer, and he pined away, and at last he died, first telling this history to his mother who, like all widows, was a garrulous woman and loved a good story. . . .

Impossible to imagine with what life and fire old Miss Henhouse gave this history. You could see with your own eyes the golden ship, the diamond buckles of the Scarlet Admiral, the young man's sad eyes, the parson's black clothes. When she had finished it seemed to Jeremy that it must have been just so. She told him that now on a summer morning or evening the Scarlet Admiral might still be seen, climbing the cliff-path, wiping his sword upon the grass, gazing out with sad

eyes to sea. Jeremy swore to himself that on the next occasion of visiting the Cove he would watch . . . he would watch—but to no single human being would he speak anything of this.

From *Jeremy*.

KENNETH GRAHAME

THE WATER RAT AND THE MOLE

‘WELL, well,’ said the Rat, ‘I suppose we ought to be moving. I wonder which of us had better pack the luncheon-basket?’ He did not speak as if he was frightfully eager for the treat.

‘O, please let me,’ said the Mole. So, of course, the Rat let him.

Packing the basket was not quite such pleasant work as unpacking the basket. It never is. But the Mole was bent on enjoying everything, and although just when he had got the basket packed and strapped up tightly he saw a plate staring up at him from the grass, and when the job had been done again the Rat pointed out a fork which anybody ought to have seen, and last of all, behold! the mustard pot, which he had been sitting on without knowing it—still, somehow, the thing got finished at last, without much loss of temper.

The afternoon sun was getting low as the Rat sculled gently homewards in a dreamy mood, murmuring poetry-things over to himself, and not paying much attention to Mole. But the Mole was very full of lunch and self-satisfaction, and pride, and already quite at home in a boat (so he thought) and was getting a bit restless besides: and presently he said, ‘Ratty! Please, *I* want to row, now!’

The Rat shook his head with a smile. 'Not yet, my young friend,' he said—'wait till you've had a few lessons. It's not so easy as it looks.'

The Mole was quiet for a minute or two. But he began to feel more and more jealous of Rat, sculling so strongly and so easily along, and his pride began to whisper that he could do it every bit as well. He jumped up and seized the sculls, so suddenly, that the Rat, who was gazing out over the water and saying more poetry-things to himself, was taken by surprise and fell backwards off his seat with his legs in the air for the second time, while the triumphant Mole took his place and grabbed the sculls with entire confidence.

'Stop it, you *silly* ass!' cried the Rat, from the bottom of the boat. 'You can't do it! You'll have us over!'

The Mole flung his sculls back with a flourish, and made a great dig at the water. He missed the surface altogether, his legs flew up above his head, and he found himself lying on the top of the prostrate Rat. Greatly alarmed, he made a grab at the side of the boat, and the next moment—Sploosh!

Over went the boat, and he found himself struggling in the river.

O my, how cold the water was, and O, how *very* wet it felt. How it sang in his ears as he went down, down, down! How bright and welcome the sun looked as he rose to the surface coughing and spluttering! How black was his despair when he felt himself sinking again! Then a firm paw gripped him by the back of his neck. It was the Rat, and he was evidently laughing—the Mole could *feel* him laughing, right down his arm and through his paw, and so into his—the Mole's neck.

The Rat got hold of a scull and shoved it under the

Mole's arm; then he did the same by the other side of him and, swimming behind, propelled the helpless animal to shore, hauled him out, and set him down on the bank, a squashy, pulpy lump of misery.

When the Rat had rubbed him down a bit, and wrung some of the wet out of him, he said, 'Now, then, old fellow! Trot up and down the towing-path as hard as you can, till you're warm and dry again, while I dive for the luncheon-basket.'

So the dismal Mole, wet without and ashamed within, trotted about till he was fairly dry, while the Rat plunged into the water again, recovered the boat, righted her and made her fast, fetched his floating property to shore by degrees, and finally dived successfully for the luncheon-basket and struggled to land with it.

When all was ready for a start once more, the Mole, limp and dejected, took his seat in the stern of the boat; and as they set off, he said in a low voice, broken with emotion, 'Ratty, my generous friend! I am very sorry indeed for my foolish and ungrateful conduct. My heart quite fails me when I think how I might have lost that beautiful luncheon-basket. Indeed, I have been a complete ass, and I know it. Will you overlook it this once and forgive me, and let things go on as before?'

'That's all right, bless you!' responded the Rat cheerily. 'What's a little wet to a Water Rat? I'm more in the water than out of it most days. Don't you think any more about it; and, look here! I really think you had better come and stop with me for a little time. It's very plain and rough, you know—not like Toad's house at all—but you haven't seen that yet; still, I can make you comfortable. And I'll teach you to row, and to swim, and you'll soon be as handy on the water as any of us.'

The Mole was so touched by his kind manner of speaking that he could find no voice to answer him; and he had to brush away a tear or two with the back of his paw. But the Rat kindly looked in another direction, and presently the Mole's spirits revived again, and he was even able to give some straight back-talk to a couple of moorhens who were sniggering to each other about his bedraggled appearance.

When they got home, the Rat made a bright fire in the parlour, and planted the Mole in an arm-chair in front of it, having fetched down a dressing-gown and slippers for him, and told him river stories till supper-time. Very thrilling stories they were, too, to an earth-dwelling animal like Mole. Stories about weirs, and sudden floods, and leaping pike, and steamers that flung hard bottles—at least bottles were certainly flung, and *from* steamers, so presumably *by* them; and about herons, and how particular they were whom they spoke to; and about adventures down drains, and night-fishings with Otter, or excursions far afield with Badger. Supper was a most cheerful meal; but very shortly afterwards a terribly sleepy Mole had to be escorted upstairs by his considerate host, to the best bedroom, where he soon laid his head on his pillow in great peace and contentment, knowing that his new-found friend the River was lapping the sill of his window.

This day was only the first of many similar ones for the emancipated Mole, each of them longer and fuller of interest as the ripening summer moved onward. He learnt to swim and to row, and entered into the joy of running water; and with his ear to the reed-stems he caught, at intervals, something of what the wind went whispering so constantly among them.

From *The Wind in the Willows*.

DAVID GARNETT

A MAN IN THE ZOO

NOBODY came into the Ape-house until twelve o'clock, when two little girls came in; they looked into his cage, and the younger of them said to her sister:

'What monkey's that? Where is it?'

'I don't know,' said the elder girl. Then she said: 'I believe the man is there to be looked at.'

'Why, he's just like Uncle Bernard,' said the little girl.

They looked at Cromartie with an offended stare, and then went on at once to the Orang-outang, who was an old friend. The grown-up people who came in during the afternoon read the notice in a puzzled way, sometimes aloud, and more than once after a hurried glance they went out of the house. They were all embarrassed except a jaunty little man who came in just before closing time. He laughed, and laughed again, and finally he had to sit down on a seat, where he sat choking for three or four minutes, after which he took off his hat to Cromartie and went out of the house saying aloud: 'Splendid! Wonderful! Bravo!'

The next day there were rather more people, but not a great crowd. One or two men came and took photographs, but Mr. Cromartie had already learnt a trick that was to serve him well in his new situation—that of not looking through the bars, so that often he would not know whether there were people watching him or not. Everything was made very comfortable for him, and on that score he was glad enough that he had come. . . .

In the evening he was let out, and walked round the Gardens alone. He tried to make friends with one or

two of the creatures, but they would not take notice of him. The evening was cool and fresh, and he was glad to be out of the stuffy Ape-house. He felt it very strange to be alone in the Zoo at that hour, and strange to have to go back to his cage. The next day, just after breakfast, a crowd began pushing into the house, which was soon packed full. The crowd was noisy, some persons in it calling out to him very persistently.

It was easy enough for Cromartie to ignore them, and never let his eyes wander through the wire-netting, but he could not prevent himself from knowing that they were there. By eleven o'clock his keeper had to fetch four policemen, two standing at each door to keep the crowd back. The people were made to stand in a queue, and to keep moving all the time.

This went on all day, and in fact there were thousands waiting to see 'The Man' who had to be turned away before they could get a sight of him. Collins said it was worse than any bank-holiday.

Cromartie did not betray any uneasiness; he ate his lunch, smoked a cigar, and played several games of Patience, but by tea-time he was exhausted, and would have liked to go and lie down in his bedroom, but it seemed to him that to do so would be to confess weakness. What made it worse, because more ridiculous, was that the Chimpanzee and the Orang-outang next door, each came to the partition walls and spent the whole day staring at him too. No doubt they were only imitating the public in doing so, but they added a great deal to poor Mr. Cromartie's unhappiness. At last the long day was over, the crowds departed, the Gardens were closed, and then came another surprise, for his two neighbours did not go away. No, they clung to the wire partitions and

began to chatter and show their teeth at him. Cromartie was too tired to stay in the cage, and went and lay down in his bedroom. When he came back after an hour the Chimpanzee and the Orang were still there, and greeted him with angry snarls. There was no doubt about it—they were threatening him.

Cromartie did not understand why this should be until Collins, who had come past, explained it to him.

‘They are wild with jealousy,’ he said, ‘that you should have drawn such a large crowd.’ And he warned Mr. Cromartie to be very careful not to go within reach of their fingers. They would tear his hair out and kill him if they could get at him.

At first Mr. Cromartie found this very hard to credit, but afterwards, when he got to know the characters of his fellow-captives better, it became the most ordinary commonplace. He learnt that all the monkeys, the elephants, and the bears felt jealous in this way. It was natural enough that the creatures that were fed by the public should feel resentment if they were passed over, for they are all insatiably greedy, and the worse they digest the food given them the more anxious they are to glut themselves with it. The wolves felt a different jealousy, for they were constantly forming attachments to particular persons among the crowd, and if the chosen person neglected them for a neighbour they became jealous. Only the larger cats, lions and panthers, seemed free from this degrading passion.

During his stay Mr. Cromartie gradually came to know all the beasts in the Gardens pretty well, since he was allowed out every evening after closing time, and very often was allowed to go into other cages. Nothing struck him more forcibly than the distinction which most of the

different creatures very soon drew between him and the keepers. When a keeper came past every animal would pay some attention, whereas few of them would even look round for Mr. Cromartie. He was treated by the vast majority with indifference. As time went on he saw that they treated him as they treated each other, and it struck him that they had somehow learnt that he was being exhibited as they were themselves. This impression was so forcible that Mr. Cromartie believed it without question, though it is not easy to prove that it was so, and still more difficult to explain how such a piece of knowledge could have spread among so heterogeneous a collection of creatures. Yet the attitude of the animals to each other was so marked, that Mr. Cromartie not only observed it in them, but very soon came to feel it in himself for them. He could not describe it better than by calling it firstly 'cynical indifference' and then adding that it was perfectly good-natured. It was expressed usually by total indifference, but sometimes by something between a yawn of contempt and a grin of cynical appreciation. It was just in these slight shades of manner that Mr. Cromartie found the animals interesting. Naturally they had nothing to say to him, and in such artificial surroundings their natural habits were difficult to ascertain, only those living in families or colonies ever seeming perfectly at their ease, but they all did seem to reveal something of themselves in their attitude to each other. To man they showed quite different behaviour, but in their eyes Mr. Cromartie was not a man. He might smell like one, but they saw at once that he had come out of a cage.

There is in this a possible explanation of the often-recorded fact that it is particularly easy for convicts to make friends with mice and rats in prison.

For the rest of that week crowds collected round the new Ape-house every day, and the queue for admittance was longer than that at the pit of Drury Lane Theatre on a first night.

Thousands of people paid for admission to the Gardens and waited patiently for hours in order to catch a glimpse of the new creature which the Society had acquired, and none were really disappointed when they had seen him, although many professed to be so. For everyone went away with what people are most grateful for having—that is, a new subject for conversation, something that everyone could discuss and have an opinion about, viz., the propriety of exhibiting a man. Not that this discussion was confined to those who had actually been successful in catching a glimpse of him. On the contrary it raged in every train, in every drawing-room, and in the columns of every newspaper in England. Jokes on the subject were made at public dinners, and at music-halls, and Mr. Cromartie was referred to continually in *Punch*, sometimes in a facetious manner. Sermons were preached about him, and a Labour Member in the House of Commons said that when the working classes came into power the rich would be put ‘alongside the Man in the Zoo, where they properly belonged.’

What was the strangest thing was that everyone held the view either that a man ought to be exhibited, or that he ought not to be exhibited, and that after a week’s time there were not half a dozen men in England who believed no moral principle to be involved in the matter.

From *A Man in the Zoo*.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

MR. GISSING'S NEPHEWS

IT was after dinner, an April evening, and Gissing¹ slipped away from the house for a stroll. He was afraid to stay in, because he knew that if he did, Fuji would ask him again to fix the dishcloth rack in the kitchen. Fuji was very short in stature, and could not reach up to the place where the rack was screwed over the sink. Like all people whose minds are very active, Gissing hated to attend to little details like this. It was a weakness in his character. Fuji had asked him six times to fix the rack, but Gissing always pretended to forget about it. To appease his methodical butler he had written on a piece of paper *Fix Dishcloth Rack* and pinned it on to his dressing-table pincushion; but he paid no attention to the memorandum.

He went out into a green April dusk. Down by the pond piped those repeated treble whisperings: they still distressed him with a mysterious unbridled summons, but Mike Terrier had told him that the secret of respectability is to ignore whatever you don't understand. Careful observation of this maxim had somewhat dulled the cry of that shrill queer music. It now caused only a faint pain in his mind. Still, he walked that way because the little meadow by the pond was agreeably soft underfoot. Also, when he walked close beside the water the voices were silent. That is worth noting, he said to himself. If you go directly at the heart of a mystery, it ceases to be a mystery, and becomes only a question of drainage. (Mr. Poodle had told him that if he had the

¹ Mr. Gissing and all the other characters in this story are dogs.

pond and swamp drained, the frog-song would not annoy him.) But to-night, when the keen chirruping ceased, there was still another sound that did not cease—a faint, appealing cry. It caused a prickling on his shoulder blades, it made him both angry and tender. He pushed through the bushes. In a little hollow were three small puppies, whining faintly. They were cold and draggled with mud. Someone had left them there, evidently, to perish. They were huddled close together; their eyes, a cloudy unspeculative blue, were only just opened. . . .

He picked them up carefully and carried them home.

‘Quick, Fuji!’ he said. ‘Warm some milk, some of the Grade A, and put a little brandy in it. I’ll get the spare-room bed ready.’

He rushed upstairs, wrapped the puppies in a blanket, and turned on the electric heater to take the chill from the spare-room. The little pads of their paws were ice-cold, and he filled the hot water bottle and held it carefully to their twelve feet. Their pink stomachs throbbed, and at first he feared they were dying. ‘They *must* not die!’ he said fiercely. ‘If they did, it would be a matter for the police, and no end of trouble.’

Fuji came up with the milk, and looked very grave when he saw the muddy footprints on the clean sheet.

‘Now, Fuji,’ said Gissing, ‘do you suppose they can lap, or will we have to pour it down?’

In spite of his superior manner, Fuji was a good fellow in an emergency. It was he who suggested the fountain-pen filler. They washed the ink out of it, and used it to drip the hot brandy-and-milk down the puppies’ throats. Their noses, which had been icy, suddenly

became very hot and dry. Gissing feared a fever and thought their temperatures should be taken.

'The only thermometer we have,' he said, 'is the one on the porch, with the mercury split in two. I don't suppose that would do. Have you a clinical thermometer, Fuji?'

Fuji felt that his employer was making too much fuss over the matter.

'No, sir,' he said, firmly. 'They are quite all right. A good sleep will revive them. They will be as fit as possible in the morning.'

Fuji went out into the garden to brush the mud from his neat white jacket. His face was inscrutable. Gissing sat by the spare-room bed until he was sure the puppies were sleeping correctly. He closed the door so that Fuji would not hear him humming a lullaby. Three Blind Mice was the only nursery song he could remember, and he sang it over and over again.

When he tiptoed downstairs, Fuji had gone to bed. Gissing went into his study, lit a pipe, and walked up and down, thinking. By and by he wrote two letters. One was to a bookseller in the city, asking him to send (at once) one copy of Dr. Holt's book on the Care and Feeding of Children, and a well-illustrated edition of Mother Goose. The other was to Mr. Poodle, asking him to fix a date for the christening of Mr. Gissing's three small nephews, who had come to live with him.

'It is lucky they are all boys,' said Gissing. 'I would know nothing about bringing up girls.'

'I suppose,' he added after a while, 'that I shall have to raise Fuji's wages.'

Then he went into the kitchen and fixed the dishcloth rack.

From Where the Blue Begins.

'SAKI' (H. H. MUNRO)

TOBERMORY

IT was a chill, rain-washed afternoon of a late August day, that indefinite season when partridges are still in security or cold storage, and there is nothing to hunt—unless one is bounded on the north by the Bristol Channel, in which case one may lawfully gallop after fat red stags. Lady Blemley's house-party was not bounded on the north by the Bristol Channel, hence there was a full gathering of her guests round the tea-table on this particular afternoon. And, in spite of the blankness of the season and the triteness of the occasion, there was no trace in the company of that fatigued restlessness which means a dread of the pianola and a subdued hankering for auction bridge. The undisguised open-mouthed attention of the entire party was fixed on the homely negative personality of Mr. Cornelius Appin. Of all her guests, he was the one who had come to Lady Blemley with the vaguest reputation. Some one had said he was 'clever,' and he had got his invitation in the moderate expectation, on the part of his hostess, that some portion at least of his cleverness would be contributed to the general entertainment. Until tea-time that day she had been unable to discover in what direction, if any, his cleverness lay. He was neither a wit nor a croquet champion, a hypnotic force nor a begetter of amateur theatricals. Neither did his exterior suggest the sort of man in whom women are willing to pardon a generous measure of mental deficiency. He had subsided into mere Mr. Appin, and the Cornelius seemed a piece of transparent baptismal bluff. And now he was claiming to

have launched on the world a discovery beside which the invention of gunpowder, of the printing-press, and of steam locomotion were inconsiderable trifles. Science had made bewildering strides in many directions during recent decades, but this thing seemed to belong to the domain of miracle rather than to scientific achievement.

'And do you really ask us to believe,' Sir Wilfrid was saying, 'that you have discovered a means for instructing animals in the art of human speech, and that dear old Tobermory has proved your first successful pupil?'

'It is a problem at which I have worked for the last seventeen years,' said Mr. Appin, 'but only during the last eight or nine months have I been rewarded with glimmerings of success. Of course I have experimented with thousands of animals, but latterly only with cats, those wonderful creatures which have assimilated themselves so marvellously with our civilization while retaining all their highly developed feral instincts. Here and there among cats one comes across an outstanding superior intellect, just as one does among the ruck of human beings, and when I made the acquaintance of Tobermory a week ago I saw at once that I was in contact with a 'Beyond-cat' of extraordinary intelligence. I had gone far along the road to success in recent experiments; with Tobermory, as you call him, I have reached the goal.'

Mr. Appin concluded his remarkable statement in a voice which he strove to divest of a triumphant inflection. No one said 'Rats,' though Clovis's lips moved in a monosyllabic contortion which probably invoked those rodents of disbelief.

'And do you mean to say,' asked Miss Resker, after a slight pause, 'that you have taught Tobermory to say and understand easy sentences of one syllable?'

'My dear Miss Resker,' said the wonder-worker patiently, 'one teaches little children and savages and backward adults in that piecemeal fashion; when one has once solved the problem of making a beginning with an animal of highly developed intelligence, one has no need for those halting methods. Tobermory can speak our language with perfect correctness.'

This time Clovis very distinctly said 'Beyond-rats!' Sir Wilfrid was more polite, but equally sceptical.

'Hadn't we better have the cat in and judge for ourselves?' suggested Lady Blemley.

Sir Wilfrid went in search of the animal, and the company settled themselves down to the languid expectation of witnessing some more or less adroit drawing-room ventriloquism.

In a minute Sir Wilfrid was back in the room, his face white beneath its tan and his eyes dilated with excitement.

'By Gad, it's true!'

His agitation was unmistakably genuine, and his hearers started forward in a thrill of awakened interest.

Collapsing into an armchair, he continued breathlessly: 'I found him dozing in the smoking-room, and called out to him to come for his tea. He blinked at me in his usual way, and I said "Come on, Toby; don't keep us waiting"; and, by Gad! he drawled out in a most horribly natural voice that he'd come when he dashed well pleased! I nearly jumped out of my skin!'

Appin had preached to absolutely incredulous hearers; Sir Wilfrid's statement carried instant conviction. A Babel-like chorus of startled exclamation arose, amid which the scientist sat mutely enjoying the first fruit of his stupendous discovery.

In the midst of the clamour Tobermory entered the

room and made his way with velvet tread and studied unconcern across to the group seated round the tea-table.

A sudden hush of awkwardness and constraint fell on the company. Somehow there seemed an element of embarrassment in addressing on equal terms a domestic cat of acknowledged mental ability.

'Will you have some milk, Tobermory?' asked Lady Blemley in a rather strained voice.

'I don't mind if I do,' was the response, couched in a tone of even indifference. A shiver of suppressed excitement went through the listeners, and Lady Blemley might be excused for pouring out the saucerful of milk rather unsteadily.

'I'm afraid I've spilt a good deal of it,' she said apologetically.

'After all, it's not my Axminster,' was Tobermory's rejoinder.

Another silence fell on the group, and then Miss Resker, in her best district-visitor manner, asked if the human language had been difficult to learn. Tobermory looked squarely at her for a moment and then fixed his gaze serenely on the middle distance. It was obvious that boring questions lay outside his scheme of life.

'What do you think of human intelligence?' asked Mavis Pellington lamely.

'Of whose intelligence in particular?' asked Tobermory coldly.

'Oh, well, mine for instance,' said Mavis, with a feeble laugh.

'You put me in an embarrassing position,' said Tobermory, whose tone and attitude certainly did not suggest a shred of embarrassment. 'When your inclusion in this

house-party was suggested Sir Wilfrid protested that you were the most brainless woman of his acquaintance, and that there was a wide distinction between hospitality and the care of the feeble-minded. Lady Blemley replied that your lack of brain-power was the precise quality which had earned you your invitation, as you were the only person she could think of who might be idiotic enough to buy their old car. You know, the one they call "The Envy of Sisyphus,"¹ because it goes quite nicely up-hill if you push it.'

Lady Blemley's protestations would have had greater effect if she had not casually suggested to Mavis only that morning that the car in question would be just the thing for her down at her Devonshire home. . . .

'Would you like to go and see if cook has got your dinner ready?' suggested Lady Blemley hurriedly, affecting to ignore the fact that it wanted at least two hours to Tobermory's dinner-time.

'Thanks,' said Tobermory, 'not quite so soon after my tea. I don't want to die of indigestion.'

'Cats have nine lives, you know,' said Sir Wilfrid heartily.

'Possibly,' answered Tobermory; 'but only one liver.'

From *The Chronicles of Clovis*.

¹ Sisyphus was the father of the sea god, Glaucus. In the underworld he was condemned to roll a big stone up a hill, which always before he got it to the top rolled down again.

ON ENGLAND

STANLEY BALDWIN

THE ENGLISH COUNTRY

. . . On an occasion like this I suppose there is no one who does not ask himself in his heart and is a little shy of expressing it, what it is that England stands for to him, and to her. And there comes into my mind a wonder as to what England may stand for in the minds of generations to come, if our country goes on during the next generation as she has done in the last two, in seeing her fields converted into towns.

To me, England is the country, and the country is England. And when I ask myself what I mean by England, when I think of England when I am abroad, England comes to me through my various senses—through the ear, through the eye, and through certain imperishable scents. I will tell you what they are, and there may be those among you who feel as I do.

The sounds of England, the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy, the corncrake on a dewy morning, the sound of the scythe against the whetstone, and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill, the sight that has been seen in England since England was a land, and may be seen in England long after the Empire has perished and every works in England has ceased to function, for centuries the one eternal sight of

England. The wild anemones in the woods in April, the last load at night of hay being drawn down a lane as the twilight comes on, when you can scarcely distinguish the figures of the horses as they take it home to the farm, and above all, most subtle, most penetrating and most moving, the smell of wood smoke coming up in an autumn evening, or the smell of the scutch fires: that wood smoke that our ancestors, tens of thousands of years ago, must have caught on the air when they were coming home with the result of the day's forage, when they were still nomads, and when they were still roaming the forests and the plains of the continent of Europe. These things strike down into the very depths of our nature, and touch chords that go back to the beginning of time and the human race, but they are chords that with every year of our life sound a deeper note in our innermost being.

These are the things that make England, and I grieve for it that they are not the childish inheritance of the majority of the people to-day in our country. They ought to be the inheritance of every child born into this country, but nothing can be more touching than to see how the working man and woman after generations in the towns will have their tiny bit of garden if they can, will go to gardens if they can, to look at something they have never seen as children, but which their ancestors knew and loved. The love of these things is innate and inherent in our people. It makes for that love of home, one of the strongest features of our race, and it is that that makes our race seek its new home in the Dominions overseas, where they have room to see things like this that they can no more see at home. It is that power of making homes, almost peculiar to our people, and it is one of the sources of their greatness. They go overseas, and they

take with them what they learned at home: love of justice, love of truth, and the broad humanity that are so characteristic of English people. It may well be that these traits on which we pride ourselves, which we hope to show and try to show in our own lives, may survive—survive among our people so long as they are a people—and I hope and believe this, that just as to-day more than fifteen centuries since the last of those great Roman legionaries left England, we still speak of the Roman strength, and the Roman work, and the Roman character, so perhaps in the ten thousandth century, long after the Empires of this world as we know them have fallen and others have risen and fallen, and risen and fallen again, the men who are then on this earth may yet speak of those characteristics which we prize as the characteristics of the English, and that long after, maybe, the name of the country has passed away, wherever men are honourable and upright and persevering, lovers of home, of their brethren, of justice and of humanity, the men in the world of that day may say, 'We still have among us the gifts of that great English race.'

From On England.

JOHN GALSWORTHY

SHEEP-SHEARING

FROM early morning there had been bleating of sheep in the yard, so that one knew the creatures were being sheared, and toward evening I went along to see. Thirty or forty naked-looking ghosts of sheep were penned against the barn, and perhaps a dozen still inhabiting their coats. Into the wool of one of these bulky ewes

the farmer's small, yellow-haired daughter was twisting her fist, hustling it toward Fate; though pulled almost off her feet by the frightened, stubborn creature, she never let go, till, with a despairing cough, the ewe had passed over the threshold and was fast in the hands of a shearer. At the far end of the barn, close by the doors, I stood a minute or two before shifting up to watch the shearing. Into that dim, beautiful home of age, with its great rafters and mellow stone archways, the June sunlight shone through loopholes and chinks, in thin glamour, powdering with its very strangeness the dark cathedraled air, where, high up, clung a fog of old grey cobwebs so thick as ever were the stalactites of a huge cave. At this end the scent of sheep and wool and men had not yet routed that home essence of the barn, like the savour of acorns and withering beech leaves.

They were shearing by hand this year, nine of them, counting the postman, who, though farm-bred, 'did'n putt much to the shearin',' but had come to round the sheep up and give general aid.

Sitting on the creatures, or with a leg firmly crooked over their heads, each shearer, even the two boys, had an air of going at it in his own way. In their white canvas shearing suits they worked very steadily, almost in silence, as if drowsed by the 'click-clip, click-clip' of the shears. And the sheep, but for an occasional wriggle of legs or head, lay quiet enough, having an inborn sense perhaps of the fitness of things, even when, once in a way, they lost more than wool; glad too, mayhap, to be rid of their matted vestments. From time to time the little damsel offered each shearer a jug and glass, but no man drank till he had finished his sheep; then he would get up, stretch his cramped muscles, drink deep, and almost

instantly sit down again on a fresh beast. And always there was the buzz of flies swarming in the sunlight of the open doorway, the dry rustle of the pollarded lime-trees in the sharp wind outside, the bleating of some released ewe, upset at her own nakedness, the scrape and shuffle of heels and sheep's limbs on the floor, together with the 'click-clip, click-clip' of the shears.

As each ewe, finished with, struggled up, helped by a friendly shove, and bolted out dazedly into the pen, I could not help wondering what was passing in her head—in the heads of all those unceremoniously treated creatures; and, moving nearer to the postman, I said:

'They're really very good, on the whole.'

He looked at me, I thought, qucerly.

'Yaas,' he answered; 'Mr. Molton's the best of them.'

I looked askance at Mr. Molton; but, with his knee crooked round a young ewe, he was shearing calmly.

'Yes,' I admitted, 'he is certainly good.'

'Yaas,' replied the postman.

Edging back into the darkness, away from that uncomprehending youth, I escaped into the air, and passing the remains of last year's stacks under the tall, toppling elms, sat down in a field under the bank. It seemed to me that I had food for thought. In that little misunderstanding between me and the postman was all the essence of the difference between that state of civilization in which sheep could prompt a sentiment, and that state in which sheep could not.

The heat from the dropping sun, not far now above the moorline, struck full into the ferns and long grass of the bank where I was sitting, and the midges rioted on me in this last warmth. The wind was barred out, so that one had the full sweetness of the clover, fast becoming hay,

over which the swallows were wheeling and swooping after flies. And far up, as it were the crown of Nature's beautiful devouring circle, a buzzard hawk, almost stationary on the air, floated, intent on something pleasant below him. A number of little hens crept through the gate one by one, and came round me. It seemed to them that I was there to feed them; and they held their neat red or yellow heads to one side and the other, inquiring with their beady eyes, surprised at my stillness. They were pretty with their speckled feathers, and as it seemed to me, plump and young, so that I wondered how many of them would in time feed me. Finding, however, that I gave them nothing to eat, they went away, and there arose, in place of their clucking, the thin singing of air passing through some long tube. I knew it for the whining of my dog, who had nosed me out, but could not get through the padlocked gate. And as I lifted him over, I was glad the postman could not see me—for I felt that to lift a dog over a gate would be against the principles of one for whom the connection of sheep with good behaviour had been too strange a thought. And it suddenly rushed into my mind that the time would no doubt come when the conduct of apples, being plucked from the mother tree, would inspire us, and we should say: 'They're really very good!' And I wondered, were those future watchers of apple-gathering farther from me than I, watching the sheep-shearing, from the postman? I thought, too, of the pretty dreams being dreamt about the land, and of the people who dreamed them. And I looked at that land, covered with the sweet pinkish-green of the clover, and considered how much of it, through the medium of sheep, would find its way into me, to enable me to come out here and be eaten by

midges, and speculate about things, and conceive the sentiment of how good the sheep were. And it all seemed queer. I thought, too, of a world entirely composed of people who could see the sheen rippling on that clover, and feel a sort of sweet elation at the scent of it, and I wondered how much clover would be sown then? Many things I thought of, sitting there, till the sun sank below the moorline, the wind died off the clover, and the midges slept. Here and there in the iris-coloured sky a star crept out; the soft-hooting owls awoke. But still I lingered, watching how, one after another, shapes and colours died into twilight; and I wondered what the postman thought of twilight, that inconvenient state, when things were neither dark nor light; and I wondered what the sheep were thinking this first night without their coats.

From The Inn of Tranquillity.

THOMAS HARDY

PLANTING THE FIRS

WHAT he had forgotten was that there were a thousand young fir trees to be planted in a neighbouring spot which had been cleared by the woodcutters, and that he had arranged to plant them with his own hands. He had a marvellous power of making trees grow. Although he would seem to shovel in the earth quite carelessly, there was a sort of sympathy between himself and the fir, oak, or beech that he was operating on; so that the roots took hold of the soil in a few days. When, on the other hand, any of the journeymen planted, although they seemed to go through an identically similar process, one quarter of the trees would die away during the ensuing August.

Hence Winterborne found delight in the work even when, as at present, he contracted to do it on portions of the woodland in which he had no personal interest. Marty, who turned her hand to anything, was usually the one who performed the part of keeping the trees in a perpendicular position whilst he threw in the mould.

He accompanied her towards the spot, being inclined yet further to proceed with the work by the knowledge that the ground was close to the wayside along which Grace must pass on her way from Hintock house.

'You've a cold in the head, Marty,' he said as they walked. 'That comes of cutting off your hair.'

'I suppose it do. Yes; I've three headaches going on in my head at the same time.'

'Three headaches!'

'Yes, Mr. Winterborne: a rheumatic headache in my poll, a sick headache over my eyes, and a misery headache in the middle of my brain. However, I came out, for I thought you might be waiting and grumbling like anything if I was not there.'

The holes were already dug, and they set to work. Winterborne's fingers were endowed with a gentle conjurer's touch in spreading the roots of each little tree, resulting in a sort of caress under which the delicate fibres all laid themselves out in their proper directions for growth. He put most of these roots towards the south-west; for, he said, in forty years' time, when some great gale is blowing from that quarter, the trees will require the strongest holdfast on that side to stand against it and not fall.

'How they sigh directly we put 'em upright, though while they are lying down they don't sigh at all,' said Marty.

'Do they?' said Giles. 'I've never noticed it.'

She erected one of the young pines into its hole, and held up her finger; the soft musical breathing instantly set in, which was not to cease night or day till the grown tree should be felled—probably long after the two planters had been felled themselves.

From *The Woodlanders*.

ALICE MEYNELL

IN JULY

ONE has the leisure of July for perceiving all the differences of the green of leaves. It is no longer a difference in degrees of maturity, for all the trees have darkened to their final tone, and stand in their differences of character and not of mere date. Almost all the green is grave, not sad and not dull. It has a darkened and a daily colour, in majestic but not obvious harmony with dark gray skies, and might look, to inconstant eyes, as prosaic after spring as eleven o'clock looks after the dawn.

Gravity is the word—not solemnity as towards evening, nor menace as at night. The daylight trees of July are signs of common beauty, common freshness, and a mystery familiar and abiding as night and day. In childhood we all have a more exalted sense of dawn and summer sunrise than we ever fully retain or quite recover: and also a far higher sensibility for April and April evenings—a heartache for them, which in riper years is gradually and irretrievably consoled.

Not unbeloved is that serious tree, the elm, with its leaf sitting close, unthrilled. Its stature gives it a dark gold head when it looks alone to a late sun. But if one

could go by all the woods, across all the old forests that are now meadowlands set with trees, and could walk a county gathering trees of a single kind in the mind, as one walks a garden collecting flowers of a single kind in the hand, would not the harvest be a harvest of poplars? A veritable passion for poplars is a most intelligible passion. The eyes do gather them, far and near, on a whole day's journey. Not one is unperceived, even though great timber should be passed, and hill-sides dense and deep with trees. The fancy makes a poplar day of it. Immediately the country looks alive with signals; for the poplars everywhere reply to the glance. The woods may be all various, but the poplars are separate.

All their many kinds (and aspens, their kin, must be counted with them) shake themselves perpetually free of the motionless forest. It is easy to gather them. Glances sent into the far distance pay them a flash of recognition of their gentle flashes; and as you journey you are suddenly aware of them close by. Light and the breezes are as quick as the eyes of a poplar-lover to find the willing tree that dances to be seen.

No lurking for them, no reluctance. One could never make for oneself an oak day so well. The oaks would wait to be found, and many would be missed from the gathering. But the poplars are alert enough for a traveller by express; they have an alarum aloft, and do not sleep. From within some little grove of other trees a single poplar makes a slight sign; or a long row of poplars suddenly sweep the wind. They are salient everywhere, and full of replies. They are as fresh as streams.

It is difficult to realize a drought where there are many poplars. And yet their green is not rich; the coolest have a colour much mingled with a cloud-gray. It does

but need fresh and simple eyes to recognize their unfaded life. When the other trees grow dark and keep still, the poplar and the aspen do not darken—or hardly—and the deepest summer will not find a day in which they do not keep awake. No waters are so vigilant, even where a lake is bare to the wind.

When Keats said of his Dian¹ that she fastened up her hair 'with fingers cool as aspen leaves,' he knew the coolest thing in the world. It is a coolness of colour, as well as of a leaf which the breeze takes on both sides—the greenish and the grayish. The poplar green has no glows, no gold; it is an austere colour, as little rich as the colour of willows, and less silvery than theirs. The sun can hardly gild it; but he can shine between. Poplars and aspens let the sun through with the wind. You may have the sky sprinkled through them in high midsummer, when all the woods are close.

Sending your fancy poplar-gathering, then, you ensnare wild trees, flying with life. No fisher's net ever took such glancing fishes, nor did the net of a constellation's shape ever enclose more vibrating Pleiades.

From *Essays*.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

A HOUSE IN KENT

THE house was partly built of lath and plaster and partly of that gray stone called Kentish rag, which must have been, I used to reflect with satisfaction, hewn out of the very land on which the house was set. I remember how the thought pleased me, that no exotic importation had

¹ Diana, the Goddess. See Keats' *Endymion*.

gone to the making of that English, English whole. No brilliant colour in that dun monochrome, save one, of which I will tell you presently. Have patience, for the leisure of those days comes stealing once more over me, when haste was a stranger, and men took upon them the unhurrying calm of their beasts.

After the fashion of such homes, the house stood back from a narrow lane; a low stone wall formed a kind of forecourt, which was filled with flowers, and a flagged path bordered with lavender lay stretched from the little swing-gate to the door. The steps were rounded with the constant passing of many feet. The caves were wide, and in them the martins nested year after year; the steep tiled roofs, red-brown with age, and gold-spattered with stonecrops, rose sharply up to the chimney-stacks. You have seen it all a hundred times. Do you know how such houses crouch down into their hollow? So near, so near to the warm earth. Earth! there's nothing like it; lying on it, being close to it, smelling it, and smelling all the country smells as well, not honeysuckle and roses, but the clean, acrid smell of animals, horses, dogs, and cattle, and the smell of ripe fruit, and of cut hay.

And there's something of the Noah's Ark about a farm; there's Mr. Noah, Mrs. Noah, and Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and the animals, because there's nothing in the world more like the familiar wooden figures of our childhood than the domestic animals. If you had never seen a cow before, gaunt and unwieldy, what a preposterous beast you would think it. Also a sheep—the living sheep is, if anything, even more like the woolly toy than the woolly toy is like the living sheep. And they all fit in so neatly, so warmly, just like the Noah's Ark. However, I won't labour the point . . .

This house of which I am telling you was nearer to the earth than most; it had, in fact, subsided right down into it, sinking from north to south with the settling of the clay, and the resultant appearance of established comfort was greater than I can describe to you. The irregularity of the building was the more apparent by reason of the oak beams, which should have been horizontal, but which actually sloped at a considerable angle. I found, after I had lived there no more than a couple of days, that one adopted this architectural irregularity into one's scheme of life; the furniture was propped up by blocks of wood on the south side, and I learnt not to drop round objects on to my floor, knowing that if I did so they would roll speedily out of reach. For the same reason, all the children of the house, in this generation as no doubt in many generations past, had made their first uncertain steps out in the garden before they climbed the hill or toppled down the incline of their mother's room.

I paused, on the evening of my arrival, before my future home. I said to myself, here I shall live for one, two, three, possibly four years; how familiar will be that unfamiliar gate; I arrive with curiosity, I shall leave, I hope, with regret. And I foresaw myself leaving, and my eyes travelling yearningly over the house and the little garden, which in a moment the bend of the lane would hide from me for ever. I say for ever, for I would not court the disillusion of returning to a once happy home. Then, as my eyes began to sting with the prophetic sorrow of departure, I remembered that my one, two, three, or possibly four, years were before and not behind me; so, amused at my own sensibility, I pushed open the swing-gate and went in.

From Heritage.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

ORLANDO BENEATH THE OAK TREE

HE was careful to avoid meeting anyone. There was Stubbs, the gardener, coming along the path. He hid behind a tree till he had passed. He let himself out at a little gate in the garden wall. He skirted all stables, kennels, breweries, carpenters' shops, wash-houses, places where they make tallow candles, kill oxen, forge horse-shoes, stitch jerkins—for the house was a town ringing with men at work at their various crafts—and gained the ferny path leading uphill through the park unseen. There is perhaps a kinship among qualities; one draws another along with it; and the biographer should here call attention to the fact that this clumsiness is often mated with a love of solitude. Having stumbled over a chest, Orlando naturally loved solitary places, vast views, and to feel himself for ever and ever and ever alone.

So, after a long silence, 'I am alone,' he breathed at last, opening his lips for the first time in this record. He had walked very quickly uphill through ferns and hawthorn bushes, startling deer and wild birds, to a place crowned by a single oak tree. It was very high, so high indeed that nineteen English counties could be seen beneath; and on clear days thirty or perhaps forty, if the weather was very fine. Sometimes one could see the English Channel, wave reiterating upon wave. Rivers could be seen and pleasure boats gliding on them; and galleons setting out to sea; and armadas with puffs of smoke from which came the dull thud of cannon firing; and forts on the coast; and castles among the meadows; and here a watch tower; and there a fortress; and again

some vast mansion like that of Orlando's father, massed like a town in the valley circled by walls. To the east there were the spires of London and the smoke of the city; and perhaps on the very sky-line, when the wind was in the right quarter, the craggy top and serrated edges of Snowdon herself showed mountainous among the clouds. For a moment Orlando stood counting, gazing, recognizing. That was his father's house; that his uncle's. His aunt owned these three great turrets among the trees there. The heath was theirs and the forest; the pheasant and the deer, the fox, the badger, and the butterfly.

He sighed profoundly, and flung himself—there was a passion in his movements which deserves the word—on the earth at the foot of the oak tree. He loved, beneath all this summer transiency, to feel the earth's spine beneath him; for such he took the hard root of the oak tree to be; or, for image followed image, it was the back of a great horse that he was riding; or the deck of a tumbling ship—it was anything indeed, so long as it was hard, for he felt the need of something which he could attach his floating heart to; the heart that tugged at his side; the heart that seemed filled with spiced and amorous gales every evening about this time when he walked out. To the oak tree he tied it and, as he lay there, gradually the flutter in and about him stilled itself; the little leaves hung; the deer stopped; the pale summer clouds stayed; his limbs grew heavy on the ground; and he lay so still that by degrees the deer stepped nearer and the rooks wheeled round him and the swallows dipped and circled and the dragon-flies shot past, as if all the fertility and amorous activity of a summer's evening were woven web-like about his body.

From Orlando.

ON LONDON

ALDOUS HUXLEY

A DREAM LONDON

IN the middle, there, of that great elliptical Piazza at the eastern end of the new City, stands, four-square, the Royal Exchange. Pierced only with small dark windows, and built of rough ashlar of the silvery Portland stone, the ground floor serves as a massy foundation for the huge pilasters that slide up, between base and capital, past three tiers of pedimented windows. Upon them rest the cornice, the attic and the balustrade, and on every pier of the balustrade a statue holds up its symbol against the sky. Four great portals, rich in allegory, admit to the courtyard with its double tier of coupled columns, its cloister and its gallery. The statue of Charles the Martyr rides triumphantly in the midst, and within the windows one guesses the great rooms, rich with heavy garlands of plaster, panelled with carved wood.

Ten streets give on to the Piazza, and at either end of its ellipse the water of sumptuous fountains ceaselessly blows aloft and falls. Commerce, in that to the north of the Exchange, holds up her cornucopia, and from the midst of its grapes and apples the master jet leaps up; from the teats of all the ten useful Arts, grouped with their symbols about the central figure, there spouts a score of fine subsidiary streams. The dolphins, the sea-horses and

the Tritons sport in the basin below. To the south, the ten principal cities of the Kingdom stand in a family round the Mother London, who pours from her urn an inexhaustible Thames.

Ranged round the Piazza are the Goldsmiths' Hall, the Office of Excise, the Mint, the Post Office. Their flanks are curved to the curve of the ellipse. Between pilasters their windows look out on to the Exchange, and the sister statues on the balustrades beckon to one another across the intervening space.

Two master roads of ninety feet from wall to wall run westwards from the Exchange. New Gate ends the more northern vista with an Arch of Triumph, whose three openings are deep, shadowy and solemn as the entries of caverns. The Guildhall and the halls of the twelve City Companies in their livery of rose-red brick, with their lacings of white stone at the coigns and round the windows, lend to the street an air of domestic and comfortable splendour. And every two or three hundred paces the line of the houses is broken, and in the indentation of a square recess there rises, conspicuous and insular, the fantastic tower of a parish church. Spire out of dome; octagon on octagon diminishing upwards; cylinder on cylinder; round lanterns, lanterns of many sides; towers with airy pinnacles; clusters of pillars linked by incurving cornices, and above them, four more clusters, and above once more; square towers pierced with pointed windows; spires uplifted on flying buttresses; spires bulbous at the base—the multitude of them beckons, familiar and friendly, on the sky. From the other shore, or sliding along the quiet river, you see them all, you tell over their names; and the great dome swells up in the midst overtopping them all.

The dome of St. Paul's.

The other master street that goes westward from the Piazza of the Exchange slants down towards it. The houses are of brick, plain-faced and square, arcaded at the base, so that the shops stand back from the street and the pedestrian walks dry-shod under the harmonious succession of the vaultings. And there at the end of the street, at the base of a triangular space formed by the coming together of this with another master street that runs eastwards to Tower Hill, there stands the Cathedral. To the north of it is the Deanery and under the arcades are the booksellers' shops.

From St. Paul's the main road slopes down under the swaggering Italianate arches of Ludgate, past the wide lime-planted boulevards that run north and south within and without the city wall, to the edge of the Fleet Ditch—widened now into a noble canal, on whose paved banks the barges unload their freights of country stuff—leaps it on a single flying arch to climb again to a round circus, a little to the east of Temple Bar, from which, in a pair of diagonally superimposed crosses, eight roads radiate: three northwards towards Holborn, three from the opposite arc towards the river, one eastward to the City, and one past Lincoln's Inn Fields to the west. The Piazza is all of brick and the houses that compose it are continuous above the ground-floor level; for the roads lead out under archways. To one who stands in the centre at the foot of the obelisk that commemorates the victory over the Dutch, it seems a smooth well of brick-work pierced by eight arched conduits at the base and diversified above by the three tiers of plain unornamented windows.

Who shall describe all the fountains in the open places,

all the statues and monuments? In the circus north of London Bridge, where the four roads come together, stands a pyramid of nymphs and Tritons—river goddesses of Polyolbion, sea-gods of the island beaches—bathing in a ceaseless tumble of white water. And here the city griffon spouts from his beak, the royal lion from between its jaws. St. George at the foot of the Cathedral rides down a dragon whose nostrils spout, not fire, but the clear water of the New River. In front of the India House, four elephants of black marble, endorsed with towers of white, blow through their upturned trunks the copious symbol of Eastern wealth. In the gardens of the Tower sits Charles the Second, enthroned among a troop of Muses, Cardinal Virtues, Graces and Hours. The tower of the Custom House is a pharos. A great water-gate, the symbol of naval triumph, spans the Fleet at its junction with the Thames. The river is embanked from Blackfriars to the Tower, and at every twenty paces a grave stone angel looks out from the piers of the balustrade across the water. . . .

From *Antic Hay*.

C. E. MONTAGUE

THE REAL LONDON

THE face of every town has its delicious differentness. What urban countenance is so amusingly demure as that of Stratford-on-Avon, with its set air of contained geniality, animated leisure, ordered complacency, everything with a note of reference in it to the auriferous Bard? For warmth give me red Knutsford: it glows like a firelit room full of old masters in heavy gilt frames;

its mellow settled habitableness the sum of all that men and women neither poor nor very rich could think of, in about nine hundred years, to make their town good to live in. Even Penrith, the windy little town of temperance inns, where trains take breath for a minute on their way to Scotland, and the cramped steep streets are full on Tuesday mornings of shambling, plunging cows and of tall blue-eyed men with lean reddish-brown faces—Penrith has a braced, hardy look of its own.

But of all cities, London, after all, is surely the finest to look at. You find it out if you have lived there in your youth, and then been long away, but sometimes revisit the place. You see it then with effectually opened eyes, as the man who has long been in some tropical wild sees rural England revealed while his train comes up from Plymouth through two hundred miles of trimmed, fenced garden, half-miraculous, half-laughable and wholly endearing. Fleet Street when the lamps are being lit on a clear evening; Southwark, its ramshackle wharves and mud foreshores, seen from Waterloo Bridge at five o'clock on a sunny June morning, the eighteenth-century bank of the river looking across to its nineteenth-century bank; the Temple's enclaves of peace where, the roar of the Strand comes so softened, you hear the lowest chirp of a sparrow, twenty yards away, planted clear and edgy, like a little foreground figure, on that dim background of sound; the liberal arc of a mighty circle of buildings massed above the Embankment, drawn upon the darkness in dotted lines of light, as a night train brings you in to Charing Cross; the long line of big ships dropping noiselessly down the silent river, past Greenwich and Grays, on the ebb of a midnight high tide—O, there are endless courses to this feast.

And it changes incessantly. Westminster Hall and the Abbey may give you a faint illusion of permanence, just as the Matterhorn does, though it is falling down into the valleys all day. But quit your London for some thirty years and then come back and look. Wych Street, unwidened since the Plague, has disappeared; Clare Market is gone, so is New Inn; the island church west of old Temple Bar is islanded now with a vengeance, right out in mid-stream, with the buses flowing all round it—it that used, like a Thames ait, to hug the northern bank, with only a small back-water of roadway between; a little farther west along the Strand there has vanished that curious old constriction of a London artery, the pinched gut where the thud of the East-and-West traffic used to fall almost silent as all the horses slowed down to walk through the strait. And where is the old Globe Theatre, with its redolent name? And the Olympic, whose plaster and brick must surely have been all a-tingle with the quaint ingenuous tushery of 'strong' Victorian drama, as old fiddles are with all the melody ever made on them? And, then the catacombish Opéra Comique, into which your youthful feet would descend as into a mine, leaving behind the blessed light of day? What, 'all my pretty ones'? Yea, and the old Strand Theatre too, on the south of the Strand, where 'Our Boys' reigned in glory.

Yet it is all perfectly right. Let everything—almost everything—change with a will, in any city that you love. People gush and moan too much about the loss of ancient buildings of no special note—'landmarks' and 'links with the past.' In towns, as in human bodies, the only state of health is one of rapid wasting and repair. Wych Street, Clare Market, New Inn—they matter about as

much as so many hairs or the tips of so many nails of some beloved person. The time for misgiving would come if the architectural tissues of London ever ceased to be swiftly dissolved and renewed. Woe unto her only when, like Ravenna or Venice, she buries no longer her architectural dead but keeps their bodies about her till they and she all mortify together into one great curio of petrification, like some antique mummy, a prodigy of embalmmment. Kingsway, Aldwych and all the demolitions that made way for them were salutary signs of molecular activity in London's body. The Old Bailey was no bitter loss. Over Christ's Hospital itself the wise lover of London soon wiped away his tears. In the great ages of art, buildings have not been regarded as if immortality were their due. It is but an invalidish modern notion that any house which is handsome or has had an illustrious tenant ought to be coddled into the preternatural old age which the Struldbrugs of Gulliver found to be so disappointing. Cities whose health is robust are never content to live, as it were, on their funded capital of achievement in building or anything else; they push on; they think more of building well now than of not pulling down. And no cities are so excitingly beautiful as those in which architecture is still alive and at work, as it is in London to-day. Their faces are both ancient and young, without disharmony, for all good work, of any time or kind, can live at peace with the rest. The old looks and the young looks play a chequer-work over such faces; it may be as pleasant as any that patches of light and shadow make on the side of a hill on days of sunshine and blown cloud.

From The Right Place.

G. K. CHESTERTON

LONDON INCONSEQUENCES

A LITTLE while ago I fell out of England into the town of Paris. If a man fell out of the moon into the town of Paris he would know that it was the capital of a great nation. If, however, he fell (perhaps off some other side of the moon) so as to hit the city of London, he would not know so well that it was the capital of a great nation; at any rate, he would not know that the nation was so great as it is. This would be so even on the assumption that the man from the moon could not read our alphabet, as presumably he could not, unless elementary education in that planet has gone to rather unsuspected lengths. But it is true that a great part of the distinctive quality which separates Paris from London may be even seen in the names. Real democrats always insist that England is an aristocratic country. Real aristocrats always insist (for some mysterious reason) that it is a democratic country. But if any one has any real doubt about the matter, let him consider simply the names of the streets. Nearly all the streets out of the Strand, for instance, are named after the first name, second name, third name, fourth, fifth, and sixth names of some particular noble family; after their relations, connections, or places of residence—Arundel Street, Norfolk Street, Villiers Street, Bedford Street, Southampton Street, and any number of others. The names are varied, so as to introduce the same family under all sorts of different surnames. Thus we have Arundel Street and also Norfolk Street; thus we have Buckingham Street and also Villiers Street. To say that this is not aristocracy is simply intellectual

impudence. I am an ordinary citizen, and my name is Gilbert Keith Chesterton; and I confess that if I found three streets in a row in the Strand, the first called Gilbert Street, the second Keith Street, and the third Chesterton Street, I should consider that I had become a somewhat more important person in the commonwealth than was altogether good for its health. If Frenchmen ran London (which God forbid!), they would think it quite as ludicrous that those streets should be named after the Duke of Buckingham as that they should be named after me. They are streets out of one of the main thoroughfares of London. If French methods were adopted, one of them would be called Shakspeare Street, another Cromwell Street, another Wordsworth Street; there would be statues of each of these persons at the end of each of these streets, and any streets left over would be named after the date on which the Reform Bill was passed or the Penny Postage established.

Suppose a man tried to find people in London by the names of the places. It would make a fine farce, illustrating our illogicality. Our hero, having once realized that Buckingham Street was named after the Buckingham family, would naturally walk into Buckingham Palace in search of the Duke of Buckingham. To his astonishment he would meet somebody quite different. His simple lunar logic would lead him to suppose that if he wanted the Duke of Marlborough (which seems unlikely) he would find him at Marlborough House. He would find the Prince of Wales. When at last he understood that the Marlboroughs live at Blenheim, named after the great Marlborough's victory, he would, no doubt, go there. But he would again find himself in error if, acting upon this principle, he tried to find the Duke of

Wellington, and told the cabman to drive to Waterloo. I wonder that no one has written a wild romance about the adventures of such an alien, seeking the great English aristocrats, and only guided by the names; looking for the Duke of Bedford in the town of that name, seeking for some trace of the Duke of Norfolk in Norfolk. He might sail for Wellington in New Zealand to find the ancient seat of the Wellingtons. The last scene might show him trying to learn Welsh in order to converse with the Prince of Wales.

But even if the imaginary traveller knew no alphabet of this earth at all, I think it would still be possible to suppose him seeing a difference between London and Paris, and, upon the whole, the real difference. He would not be able to read the words 'Quai Voltaire'¹; but he would see the sneering statue and the hard, straight roads; without having heard of Voltaire he would understand that the city was Voltairean. He would not know that Fleet Street was named after the Fleet Prison. But the same national spirit which kept the Fleet Prison closed and narrow still keeps Fleet Street closed and narrow. Or, if you will, you may call Fleet Street cosy, and the Fleet Prison cosy. I think I could be more comfortable in the Fleet Prison, in an English way of comfort, than just under the statue of Voltaire. I think that the man from the moon would know France without knowing French; I think that he would know England without having heard the word. For in the last resort all men talk by signs. To talk by statues is to talk by signs; to talk by cities is to talk by signs. Pillars, palaces, cathedrals, temples, pyramids, are an enormous dumb alphabet: as if some giant held up his fingers of stone. The most

¹ François Voltaire (1694-1778), French philosopher.

important things at the last are always said by signs, even if, like the Cross on St. Paul's, they are signs in heaven. If men do not understand signs, they will never understand words.

From *All Things Considered*.

A. B. WALKLEY

LONDON SURPRISES

PAUL MORAND¹ has said that London is a city that spoils you for any other. He ought to know, this alert young Frenchman, for he has travelled through it from end to end, as few Londoners do. Most of us residents are apt to take our London for granted. We know the road from home to the office and the club, we know Bond Street and Piccadilly and Ludgate Hill and St. Paul's and the Bank, and the rest we leave contentedly on the map, to be explored some day when we have time and are in the vein. I speak as a stay-at-home. There are adventurous spirits, I know, who have perlrustated London and for whom those astonishing catalogues of place-names on the front of the omnibuses mean something. For my part, I think they are mistaken. I think it is better to keep up, so far as one may, the sense of mystery as regards the place we live in. There are names on the 'buses—'Haggerston,' for instance, and 'Seven Kings'—which give me the romantic thrill of the unknown, and as I wish to keep this unimpaired, I do not design to visit the places named. If I did, I should know the truth; and few of us can bear that.

Of course if you are writing a guide-book it is a different

¹ French novelist, b. 1888.

matter. There are certain advantages in seeing the places you describe. And yet fictitious topography has its charm, especially when judiciously blended with the real thing. Miss Austen¹ mentions Richmond and Box Hill, but you will search the map in vain for Highbury.² Precisely where in Northamptonshire is Mansfield Park?² How many miles beyond Bromley and in which quarter of the compass are Hunsford Rectory and Rosings?² That is where we stay-at-homes have the best of it. London is for us the place where the real and the unreal co-exist, for any part of it which is a mere name on the map for you might just as well be fictitious. The imagination can roam free in it; all sorts of romantic novels may happen in it, whereas novels about the places you actually know must be scrupulously realistic.

And when the stay-at-home does walk abroad, what delicious surprises are in store for him! He has read in his 'Tancred'³ about the place where the French cooks live; he follows the given clues and discovers Shepherd's Market, though the French cooks seem to have departed. Shepherd's Market, in the heart of old Mayfair, is one of the oddest incongruities in London. It is a little self-conscious nowadays, perhaps, and has the air of a slum nicely tidied up for inspection, a 'show' place; just as there are certain old hostelrys in London which pride themselves (and charge extra) on account of their sanded floors and two-pronged forks. Hard by Shepherd's Market there is a pub with the delightful sign of 'The Running Footman.' I mention this, not out of consideration for the thirsty, but to show the rare Queen Anne traditions of the spot.

¹ Jane Austen (1775-1817), author of *Pride and Prejudice*, etc.

² All fictitious places mentioned in Jane Austen's books.

³ A novel by Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-1881).

Or you go down Berkeley Street and decide, for the first time in many years, so languid has hitherto been your curiosity, to penetrate the sunken passage on the confines of Lansdowne House, which you vaguely remember described in one of Trollope's ¹ novels. Here again is a surprise—for the habitual stay-at-home, not, of course, for the people who go down that passage every day. You find it leads, sooner or later, to Curzon Street, where you emerge again into the real world; but what a queer, uncanny place the passage itself is! The walls of Chester or the spires of Chartres are not more romantic. It is one of the mysteries of London. Johnson ² says of Pope's ³ Grotto at Twickenham (I quote from memory, and won't swear to every word), 'Where necessity enforced a passage, imagination created a grotto.' I don't know whether necessity enforced this passage between Berkeley Street and Curzon Street, but your imagination can create anything out of it you please. That is, if you are a true stay-at-home, who have put off exploring the passage until what some people (not psychologists) are fond of calling the psychological moment.

Perhaps the greatest surprise of all for the stay-at-home is the magic transformation which has come over some district of London all 'unbeknown' to him, while all these years he has never had, or sought, occasion to visit it. There is Chelsea. The name 'Chelsea,' until a few days ago, suggested to me the dusty, dismal ruins of what were once Cremorne Gardens, a side street or two out of Mr. Arnold Bennett's novels, and a wilderness of small,

¹ Anthony Trollope (1815-1882), author of *Barchester Towers*, etc.

² The famous Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784).

³ Alexander Pope (1688-1744), the poet.

rather smug houses. The wand of the late Mr. Willett (I am told) touched it, and converted it into a region of palatial 'Mansions.' It must be the paradise of house-agents. I suppose if one went further afield, one would find similar changes all over London. Kensington and Campden Hill, where the houses as a rule were small and snug (as distinguished from smug), have, notably, undergone the transformation of Chelsea. The demolition of Nash's Regent Street one had seen, of course, with one's own eyes; but one never suspected the new London that had arisen further west and south-west, while one was living, in blissful unconsciousness elsewhere. When asked for his address the Mulligan¹ grandly replied, 'I live over there,' sweeping his arm over the prospect of what was then generically known as the 'West End.' I should like to see the Mulligan's face if he could be brought back to-day to his 'over there.'

*Nos et mutamur.*² The tag is, for once, reassuring. If one went back to the old London that one knew, it would be with a changed heart and, I daresay, a sense of discomfort. Nevertheless, I like to think that there are still nooks and corners where the drab, dowdy, but cosy little houses of one's youth still survive. Or are they mere dream-fancies, a part of that fictitious topography with which the novels of Miss Austen enchant us?

From *Still more Prejudice*.

¹ A character in Thackeray's *Irish Sketch Book*.

² We, too, are changed.

E. V. LUCAS

BOW CHURCH AND SIR CHRISTOPHER
WREN

BOW CHURCH, or, to give its true name, St. Mary-le-Bow, is the glory of Cheapside, although probably a plébiscite¹ of children would award that honour to Mr. Bennett's giants.² The second part of its name comes from the arches or bows on which the first church was built, still in perfect preservation in the crypt; and the Court of Arches, our highest ecclesiastical tribunal, which in early days held its sittings here, derives its style from the same circumstance.

This crypt, which is of perpetual interest to antiquaries, offers the opportunity of shedding ten centuries in as many moments. One has but to leave the bustle of Cheapside, with its motor-horns and modernity, and descend a few steps, and one is not only in perfect stillness but surrounded by massive masonry of immense age, eked out here and there by Roman tiles. Only half of the crypt is shown; the other half, sealed up, contains hundreds of coffins. On a shelf is a headstone of Wren's brought from All Hallows—very like Mr. Chesterton.

Bow Church itself is just a spacious square room. Its special attractions are the crypt; the famous bell whose firm attitude of ignorance is so familiar to all children who have ever played that most thrilling of games 'Oranges and Lemons' ('"I do not know," says the great bell of

¹ Vote.

² Two gigantic figures of Gog and Magog, the London giants, which struck the chimes of a clock above the shop of Sir John Bennett Ltd., a famous firm of clockmakers. Clock and giants have since been removed to Mr. Henry Ford's museum in America.

Bow'); and the gold dragon on the top of the spire which to anyone in Cheapside caring to look up tells where the wind is. Londoners once never looked up, but the activities of Count Zeppelin have given our necks a new lissomness, and, at any rate after dark, we now look up with great frequency.¹

According to the picture postcard which the Bow verger induced me to purchase, this dragon is two hundred and twenty-one feet, six inches, above the pavement. Furthermore, it is eight feet, ten inches, long, and the crosses under its wings represent the crest of the city. The great bell of Bow, according to a similar source of information which cost me another penny, weighs fifty-three hundredweights and twenty-two pounds. It is not the bell that Whittington heard—some say on Highgate Hill and others in Bunhill Fields—but a successor. The Great Fire destroyed the ancient peal, but a new one of twelve now rings out merrily enough on practice nights. . . .

It is upon the burned church's bows or arches, in the crypt, that Sir Christopher Wren² based the present building, after the Fire of London; and when all the fortunate conjunctions of history come to be enumerated, surely the one which provided that that great man should have been here, all ready with his plans, before the ashes were cold, must rank among the first. For without Wren what would the City be? Leaving St. Paul's aside, the City is indebted to Wren for more than fifty churches, each with some peculiar charm. The sequence is exact: first the Plague; then the Fire, which cleansed

¹ This was written during the time of the air-raids in the Great War.

² The famous architect (1632-1723) who rebuilt St. Paul's.

the germ-ridden rookeries and made London healthy again; and then Sir Christopher Wren, who built the City anew. He built much beside the churches, but the churches are his peculiar glory and greatest monument.

To know his churches intimately one must visit them; but to get in a moment some idea of what he did to make London beautiful as a whole, one must ascend this Bow Church spire, or the dome of St. Paul's, or the Monument, or, better still—for each of these eminences was designed by Wren himself, and therefore they are too much in the piece, so to speak—better still, stand on one of the western Thames bridges on a fine clear afternoon when the sun is at one's back. All London's bridges are excellent places from which to see London's spires; but Hungerford Bridge is perhaps the best, and Waterloo Bridge next, as they are central and the river towards the City has a curve. In this survey St. Paul's always dominates; but there are other spires that give the eye an equal or greater pleasure. From both these bridges, St. Bride's, with its galleries springing to heaven, is very notable, and also the octagonal open-work tower of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West; whereas from London Bridge it is the soaring solidity of St. Magnus the Martyr and the delicate flying spire of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East that most delight. All are Wren's save St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, which is only of the last century.

Standing thus, with all the fair prospect spread out, one realizes the purpose and glory of Wren. Like the beneficent forester who plants for posterity, so did Wren build for us, or, if you like, plant for us, these gleaming spires being his lovely trees.

From *London Revisited*.

A. H. SIDGWICK

WALKING IN LONDON

IT may be asked whether town-walking is worth doing at all. Many people would say that it is not, and as regards the great majority of towns I should agree with them; the only thing to be done with such towns is to walk away from them as quickly as possible, and to achieve this it is pardonable to undergo the degradation of bicycling or even being driven in a vehicle. But there is one exception, and that is London. London walking is a quite distinct and peculiar thing, utterly unlike any other town-walking. It is a unique branch of walking in general and solitary walking in particular: for all the circumstances which make town-walking solitary apply ten-thousandfold in London. But if you accept this condition, and walk London alone, you will find a very curious thing, namely, that in this biggest and most monstrous of all towns you approach most nearly to pure rusticity. The strictly physical conditions, dirt, noise, smell, constriction of outlook, multiplicity of people, are as bad or worse in London than other towns; but in certain other points, by no means unimportant to a walker, the end of the series is like the beginning, the infinite is like the infinitesimal. What was possible on the South Downs, difficult in Cheltenham, and unthinkable in Liverpool, becomes possible again in London.

It all springs from one simple fact: there are so many people in London that they do not notice each other. If the Londoner paid the slightest attention to his neighbour he would go mad in a fortnight. It is physically impossible for him to notice every one he sees; conse-

quently, he gets into the habit of simply overlooking them, and as their *esse* is *percipi*, they become, for practical purposes, not there. A Londoner walking along a crowded street is really alone in the wilderness: the men are simply as trees walking. The difference between walking along Oxford Street and along the Embankment is only the difference between walking through a copse where there are many trees or on a field track where there are few.

From this two important consequences follow; first, that in London you can wear what you please. No one will notice or criticize, and even if they did there are always a hundred people worse dressed than you, with dirtier boots, with more *négligé* hats, with baggier trousers. You may, of course, meet some one you know; but here again the abnormal size of London comes to your aid. If it is 5 to 1 on meeting a friend in Cheltenham, it is 50 to 1 against in London. Second, and even more important, is the fact that in London you can sing in the streets. The roar of the traffic will drown all but the strongest passages in the highest register: and even if this lulls for a moment nobody will notice. You can even conduct with your stick if the beat of your foot is not enough. Difficult orchestral passages with variations of colour can be safely attempted in London streets: even the difference between a trumpet and a horn (which involves making faces if it is done properly) can be represented without anyone heeding you.

Traversing thus the London streets, singing and in comfortable clothes, unheeding and unheeded by other people, the solitary walker can come near to, if he cannot attain, the proper mood of walking. It is true that a crowd may disturb his repose at times, and dodging the

people and the traffic may break the rhythm of his stride: but the sixth sense which Londoners develop enables him to avoid most obstructions without thinking, and it is surprising, as a matter of fact, how rarely one's stride is broken in a London street. The rhythm of street walking can never be quite the same as the rhythm of country walking: there is always something hard and metallic in the contact of foot and paved surface. None the less, there is a rhythm, and it can do something towards pacifying the body, enlarging the mind, and beating the disordered discourse of intellect into the smooth series of contemplation. Here again the mere size of London comes to the solitary walker's aid. It is large enough to give him the feeling of direction, to feed his innate craving for big lines. True, in London as in other towns you have frequently to make a sharp turn, giving a violent wrench to your internal organ of orientation. But if your main line be a sufficiently big one, as it can be in London, it is possible to regard these turns as temporary irregularities, and merge them in a larger whole. For example, as you go from Charing Cross to Chelsea, you start with a piece of the Strand, turn a little to cut across the lower end of Trafalgar Square and out into the Mall, and then swing round to the left, to the right, again to the right and again to the left, before you resume the big line of the King's Road. But if you envisage the whole in a sufficiently large spirit, the little irregularity of Trafalgar Square and the four turns necessitated by the intrusion of Buckingham Palace need not trouble you; they are mere modern excrescences on a line which must have existed before Buckingham Palace was built or Trafalgar fought, the line by which the citizens of London went to Chelsea to eat buns.

By walking in this way along big lines it is possible to gain some real idea of London, the relations of its parts, and the characteristic of each. The bus or cab-rider cannot really understand London: by allowing himself to be carried he loses all grip of actuality. The underground traveller is even more benighted: to him London is an unintelligible congeries of districts linked by memories of the under world. He conceives Hampstead Heath as something near Hampstead station—an awful perversion. But the walker realizes Hampstead Heath in its relation to London; he has approached it through the drab monochrome vistas of Camden Town (with the sudden leap into modernity, red brick, and green blinds at the lower end of the heath) or along the pompous and innocently self-satisfied High Street, or up the interminable sameness of FitzJohn's Avenue. He knows Parliament Hill as the end of an hour's hard walk, from which he looks back over the way that he has come: he knows the cattle-trough as the first landmark in Alf Holliday's famous walk out of London to St. Albans, which drops him over the Spaniard's Road into a new world, with a high ridge between him and London, twists him deftly through Temple Fortune, takes him into Hendon the back way by the recreation ground, and speeds him from the foot of the hill across the thirteen fields traversed by the river Silk, where a man can stretch his legs and forget all urban things awhile until confronted by the imposing structure of the Hendon Union workhouse.

But the greatest and most inspiring thing in London is the river. On the purely physical side, it ventilates the town as nothing else can do; on the most stifling days, when stone and brick have been so heated overnight that they have killed the freshness of dawn and brought the

new day to birth already old, when the feet are as lead and every breath is an oppression, when the most congenial music is a symphony of Tschaikowsky—there is still some freshness beside the river. On the aesthetic side, who shall fitly sing the praises of the river, with the morning sun catching it as one drops on to the embankment from the north, the silver mornings when the air is clear, the gold mornings with a slight fog, and the copper mornings with a thicker fog? Or the November view up-river at sunset from one of the Chelsea bridges? But the best gift of the river to London is simply itself, the long curving line on which the whole town is based, which links Fulham to Westminster and Battersea to the Docks, which shapes as nothing else can shape the walker's conception of London. Give me the man that knows his bridges and has walked the whole range of all the embankments, from Blackfriars to the uttermost parts of Chelsea beneath the shadow of the four chimneys; he alone is the true Londoner.

From *Walking Essays*.

MEN AND WOMEN

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

BOSWELL AS BIOGRAPHER

BOSWELL's position in English Literature cannot be disputed, nor can he ever be displaced from it. He has written our greatest biography. That is all. Theorize about it as much as you like, account for it how you may, the fact remains. 'Alone I did it.' There has been plenty of theorizing. Lord Macaulay took the subject in hand and tossed it up and down for half a dozen pages with a gusto that drove home to many minds the conviction, the strange conviction, that our greatest biography was written by one of the very smallest men that ever lived, 'a man of the meanest and feeblest intellect'—by a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb; by one 'who, if he had not been a great fool, would never have been a great writer.' So far Macaulay *anno Domini* 1831, in the vigorous pages of the *Edinburgh Review*. A year later appears in *Frazer's Magazine* another theory by another hand, not then famous, Mr. Thomas Carlyle. I own to an inordinate affection for Mr. Carlyle as 'literary critic.' As philosopher and sage, he has served our turn. We have had the fortune, good or bad, to outlive him; and our sad experience is that death makes a mighty difference to all but the very greatest. The sight of the author of *Sartor Resartus* in a Chelsea omnibus, the sound of Dr.

Newman's¹ voice preaching to a small congregation in Birmingham, kept alive in our minds the vision of their greatness—it seemed then as if that greatness could know no limit; but no sooner had they gone away, than somehow or another one became conscious of some deficiency in their intellectual positions—the tide of human thought rushed visibly by them, and it became plain that to no other generation would either of these men be what they had been to their own. But Mr. Carlyle as literary critic has a tenacious grasp, and Boswell was a subject made for his hand. ‘Your Scottish laird,’ says an English naturalist of those days, ‘may be defined as the hungriest and vainest of all bipeds yet known.’ Carlyle knew the type well enough. His general description of Boswell is savage:

‘Boswell was a person whose mean or bad qualities lay open to the general eye, visible, palpable to the dullest. His good qualities, again, belonged not to the time he lived in; were far from common then; indeed, in such a degree were almost unexampled; not recognizable, therefore, by everyone; nay, apt even, so strange had they grown, to be confounded with the very vices they lay contiguous to and had sprung out of. That he was a wine-bibber and good liver, gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character, is undeniable enough. That he was vain, heedless, a babbler, had much of the sycophant, alternating with the braggadocio, curiously spiced too, with an all-pervading dash of the coxcomb; that he gloried much when the tailor by a court suit had made a new man of him; that he appeared at the Shakespeare Jubilee with a riband imprinted “Corsica Boswell” round his hat, and, in short, if you will, lived no day of his life without saying and

¹ Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801–1890).

doing more than one pretentious ineptitude, all this unhappily is evident as the sun at noon. The very look of Boswell seems to have signified so much. In that cocked nose, cocked partly in triumph over his weaker fellow-creatures, partly to snuff up the smell of coming pleasure and scent it from afar, in those big cheeks, hanging like half-filled wine-skins, still able to contain more, in that coarsely-protruded shelf mouth, that fat dew-lapped chin; in all this who sees not sensuality, pretension, boisterous imbecility enough? The under-part of Boswell's face is of a low, almost brutish character.'

This is character-painting with a vengeance. Portrait of a Scotch laird by the son of a Scotch peasant. Carlyle's Boswell is to me the very man. If so, Carlyle's paradox seems as great as Macaulay's, for though Carlyle does not call Boswell a great fool in plain set terms, he goes very near it. But he keeps open a door through which he effects his escape. Carlyle sees in Bozzy 'the old reverent feeling of discipleship, in a word, hero-worship.'

'How the babbling Bozzy, inspired only by love and the recognition and vision which love can lend, epitomizes nightly the words of Wisdom, the deeds and aspects of Wisdom, and so, little by little, unconsciously works together for us the whole "Johnsoniad"—a more free, perfect, sunlit and spirit-speaking likeness than for many centuries has been drawn by man of man.'

This I think is a little overdrawn. That Boswell loved Johnson, God forbid I should deny. But that he was inspired only by love to write his life, I gravely question. Boswell was, as Carlyle has said, a greedy man—and especially was he greedy of fame—and he saw in his revered friend a splendid subject for artistic

biographic treatment. Here is where both Macaulay and Carlyle are, as I suggest, wrong. Boswell was a fool, but only in the sense in which hundreds of great artists have been fools; on his own lines, and across his own bit of country, he was no fool. He did not accidentally stumble across success, but he deliberately aimed at what he hit. Read his preface and you will discover his method. He was as much an artist as either of his two famous critics. Where Carlyle goes astray is in attributing to discipleship what was mainly due to a dramatic sense. However, theories are no great matter.

Our means of knowledge of James Boswell are derived mainly from himself; he is his own incriminator. In addition to the *Life* there is the Corsican tour, the Hebrides tour, the letters to Erskine and to Temple, and a few insignificant occasional publications in the shape of letters to the people of Scotland, etc. With these before him it is impossible for any biographer to approach Bozzy in a devotional attitude; he was all Carlyle calls him.

From *In the Name of the Bodleian*.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

MADAME D'ARBLAY

MADAME D'ARBLAY¹ is so inimitable a historian of her own life, it has been so well dealt with by Macaulay, and it is in its general outline so commonly known that there is no great need to dwell at any very great length on it here, though certain points may require notice. She was born at Lynn on the 13th of June, 1752—a fact

¹ Better known as Fanny Burney (1752–1840) and famous for her *Diary*.

for the discovery of which Croker took unnecessary trouble, and for the revelation of which he received, as was meet, unnecessary abuse. There is not the slightest evidence that Fanny ever endeavoured to conceal her age: though the admitted childishness of her appearance made people think her younger than she was. And so far from her having ever attempted to represent *Evelina* as the work of a 'girl of seventeen,' we have her own distinct statement, which none but a fool could misunderstand, and none but a churl affect to misunderstand, that her heroine is the 'girl of seventeen' and that she, the novelist, is 'past' that interesting age. Her father was the Historian of Music, latterly Organist to Chelsea Hospital, and the friend of the best men of his time. One of her brothers was an officer of Cook's,¹ and later as 'Admiral' Burney the friend of Southey, Coleridge, and especially Lamb: another was a scholar justly renowned for Greek in the day of Porson. Her sisters were all clever, and one of them was herself a novelist. There are references in the *Diary* proper, and full ones in the early *Diary*, to Fanny's backwardness, shyness, and so forth as a girl and young woman. But she was always scribbling; she was in a singularly stimulating society, and she published *Evelina* in a clandestine sort of way (1778), not indeed at 'seventeen' but at not quite twenty-six. Then she became a lioness, and remained so; *Cecilia* (1782) bringing her more fame, and (which *Evelina* had not done) some money. Later still came the famous incident of her becoming assistant Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte (1786), in which employment she abode five years, pined, and grew positively ill.

A great deal of nonsense has been, in my humble

¹ Captain James Cook, the famous explorer.

judgment, written about this episode. Macaulay, no lover of kings, especially Tory ones, very handsomely acquits George the Third; but he is remorselessly severe on Queen Charlotte. Others have involved the Royal family generally in condemnation; and almost everybody, from Macaulay himself downwards, has lamented the loss of immortal works during the period, and put down the subsequent drying up of Miss Burney's genius to its evil effect. Let us (in the greatest words, never to be hackneyed however often quoted, of her greatest friend) 'clear our minds of cant.' The offer of the appointment was, no doubt, a mistake of good nature, and its acceptance was one of bad judgment. Indeed, it seems to me that Dr. Burney, to please whom Fanny accepted it against her wish, has never had his due measure of blame. Despite his amiability he seems always to have been rather a silly man, as indeed is not obscurely hinted in the oxymel of Mrs. Thrale's verses on him, and as is established by the fact of his not only writing a poem on astronomy and pestering Herschel about it, but habitually keeping a doggerel diary after a fashion common to his day, and pardonable enough to schoolboys and undergraduates, but not so pardonable in elderly professional men. On this occasion, too, he was, I fear, not merely silly, but selfish. It was the dream of his life—a dream already once or twice disappointed—to be 'Master of the King's Band'; and he evidently thought that if his daughter were close about the royal person, he would secure this coveted post. It is satisfactory that he did not.

As to the Queen—for the King, as we have seen, is acquitted by a hostile judge—there are not so many excuses required for her as seems to be generally thought, and there are many more available than are required.

It is equally history and human nature that royal personages, whether their royalty be political or metaphorical, should be apt to think that the honour of serving them is far more than sufficient recompense for the pains of it. But this need not be counted. Queen Charlotte had been accustomed to the slavish submission paid to German Transparencies and Serenities much humbler in rank than an English Queen. She knew perfectly well that hundreds of ladies in Germany and France, and dozens in England, would have gone on their knees for the place. She had the want of understanding of physical weakness, which is far too common in physically strong people, be they queens or not. Part of Miss Burney's sufferings was due to their Majesties' natural attachment to Mrs. Schwellenberg, who, old cat as she was, was intensely faithful; and part to her own failure to assert herself and the equality which it would seem she titularly held. The restrictions of visitors and so forth, which are so bitterly complained of in the *Diary*, were almost unavoidable in a household which tried above all things to avoid the licence of the two previous reigns and of the Prince of Wales's establishment. The parsimony was not shown to Miss Burney only.

But the important question for posterity is whether this residence at Court really did as it is pretended, 'dry her vein' of novel writing, and this will be best treated later; it is enough to say for the present that facts and probabilities are equally against it.

When she was released (1791), the interesting part of her life to others was practically over, though the most interesting part of it to herself was yet to begin. In the society of her friends, the Lockes of Norbury Park, she met an elderly and respectable *émigré*, the Chevalier

D'Arblay, who had no money, and whose attractions generally were not very clear except to the eyes of love. They married (1793)—one suspects M. D'Arblay to have been a rather poor though probably no unamiable kind of creature—on nothing but the little pension which the Queen had given Frances when she left Court; and the Chevalier took to gardening and 'invested the apartments with imperceptible cupboards,' as his wife says in the unbelievable English of her later times. A baby—Alexander, who afterwards went to Cambridge, was heard of by Macaulay, his six years junior, as a rather remarkable mathematician, took orders in the Church of England, and died three years before his mother in 1837—was born in 1794. Then Madame D'Arblay wrote *Camilla*, which was published in the first place by subscription with great success, and brought her in some three thousand pounds, but kept no hold on the public. When Napoleon's power was established, M. D'Arblay returned to France and obtained a civil post; but towards the end of the Tyranny his wife and child took the opportunity to escape to England. He had better luck under the Restoration than under the Empire, but did not stay long in France, and returning to England, died at Bath in 1818. Meanwhile his wife had brought out the terrible failure of *The Wanderer* (which, however, was widely sold before people found out how bad it was), and in the same year (1814) lost her father. Not much is recorded of her later years by others, except a visit from Sir Walter Scott. She died aged eighty-eight on the 6th of January, 1840, having brought out the unlucky *Memoirs* of her father in 1832, her eightieth year.

Evelina delectable; *Cecilia* admirable; *Camilla* estim-

able; *The Wanderer* impossible; *The Memoirs of Dr. Burney* inconceivable; the *Diary* and *Letters*, whether original or 'early', unequal, but at their best seldom equalled;—this might serve in the snip-snap and flashy way for a short criticism of Madame D'Arblay's work.

From *Collected Essays*.

SIR EDMUND GOSSE

BEAU NASH

THERE are cases, not known to every collector of books, where it is not the first which is the really desirable edition of a work, but the second. One of these rare examples of the exception which proves the rule is the second edition of Goldsmith's *Life of Beau Nash*. Disappointment awaits him who possesses only the first; it is in the second that the best things originally appeared. The story is rather to be divined than told as a history, but we can see pretty plainly how the lines of it must have run. In the early part of 1762, Oliver Goldsmith, at that time still undistinguished, but in the very act of blossoming into fame, received a commission of fourteen guineas to write for Newbery a life of the strange old beau, Mr. Nash, who had died in 1761. On the same day, which was March 5th, he gave a receipt to the publisher for three other publications, written or to be written, so that very probably it was not expected that he should immediately supply all the matter sold. In the summer he seems to have gone down to Bath on a short visit, and to have made friends with the Beau's executor, Mr. George Scott. It has even been said that he cultivated the Mayor and Aldermen of Bath with such success

that they presented him with yet another fifteen guineas. But of this, in itself highly improbable instance of municipal benefaction, the archives of the city yield no proof. At least Mr. Scott gave him access to Nash's papers, and with these he seems to have betaken himself back to London.

It is a heart-rending delusion and a cruel snare to be paid for your work before you accomplish it. As soon as once your work is finished you ought to be promptly paid; but to receive your lucre one minute before it is due, is to tempt Providence to make a Micawber¹ of you. Goldsmith, of course, without any temptation being needed, was the very ideal Micawber of letters, and the result of paying him beforehand was that he had, simply, to be popped into the mill by force, and the copy ground out of him. It is evident that in the case of the first edition of the *Life of Beau Nash*, the grinding process was too mercifully applied, and the book when it appeared was short measure. It has no dedication, no 'advertisement,' and very few notes, while it actually omits many of the best stories. The wise bibliophile, therefore, will eschew it, and will try to get the second edition issued a few weeks later in the same year, which Newbery evidently insisted that Goldsmith should send out to the public in proper order.

Goldsmith treats Nash with very much the same sort of indulgent and apologetic sympathy with which M. Barbey d'Aurevilly treats Brummell.² He does not affect to think that the world calls for a full-length statue of such a fantastic hero; but he seems to claim

¹ See Dickens' *David Copperfield*.

² Beau Brummell (1778-1840), a celebrated dandy and friend of George IV.

leave to execute a statuette in terra-cotta for a cabinet of curiosities. From that point of view, as a queer object of *vertù*,¹ as a specimen of the *bric-à-brac*¹ of manners, both the one and the other, the King of Beaux and the Emperor of Dandies, are welcome to amateurs of the odd and the entertaining. At the head of Goldsmith's book stands a fine portrait of Nash, engraved by Anthony Walker, one of the best and rarest of early English line-engravers, after an oil-picture by William Hoare, presently to be one of the foundation-members of the Royal Academy, and now and throughout his long life the principal representative of the fine arts at Bath. Nash is here represented in his famous white hat—*galero albo*, as his epitaph has it; the ensign of his rule at Bath, the more than coronet of his social sway.

The breast of his handsome coat is copiously trimmed with rich lace, and his old, old eyes, with their wrinkles and their crow's feet, look demurely out from under an incredible wig, an umbrageous, deep-coloured ramille of early youth. It is a wonderfully hard-featured, serious, fatuous face, and it lives for us under the delicate strokes of Anthony Walker's graver. The great Beau looks as he must have looked when the Duchess of Queensberry dared to appear at the Assembly House on a ball night with a white apron on. It is a pleasant story, and only told properly in our second edition. King Nash had issued an edict forbidding the wearing of aprons. The Duchess dared to disobey. Nash walked up to her and deftly snatched her apron from her, throwing it on to the back benches where the ladies' women sat. What a splendid moment! Imagine the excitement of all that fashionable company—the drawn battle between the

¹ Curiosities.

Majesty of Etiquette and the Majesty of Beauty! The Beau remarked, with sublime calm, that 'none but Abigails appeared in white aprons.' The Duchess hesitated, felt that her ground had slipped from under her, gave way with the most admirable tact, and 'with great good sense and humour, begged his *Majesty's* pardon.'

Aprons were not the only red rags to the bull of ceremony. He was quite as unflinching an enemy to top-boots. He had already banished swords from the assembly-room, because their clash frightened the ladies, and their scabbards tore people's dresses. But boots were not so easily banished. The county squires liked to ride into the city, and, leaving their horses at a stable, walk straight into the dignity of the minuet. Nash, who had a genius for propriety, saw how hateful this was, and determined to put a stop to it. He slew top-boots and aprons at the same time. . . .

It had not been without labour and a long struggle that Nash had risen to this position of unquestioned authority at Bath. His majestic rule was the result of more than half a century of painstaking. He had been born far back in the seventeenth century, so far back that, incredible as it sounds, a love adventure of his early youth had supplied Vanbrugh,¹ in 1695, with an episode for his comedy of *Æsop*. But after trying many forms of life, and weary of his own affluence, he came to Bath just at the moment when the fortunes of that ancient centre of social pleasure were at their lowest ebb. Queen Anne had been obliged to divert herself, in 1703, with a fiddle and a hautboy,² and with country dances on the bowling-

¹ Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726), dramatist and architect.

² An oboe.

green. The lodgings were dingy and expensive, the pump-house had no director, the nobility had haughtily withdrawn from such vulgar entertainments as the city now alone afforded. The famous and choleric physician, Dr. Radcliffe, in revenge for some slight he had endured, had threatened to 'throw a toad into King Bladud's Well,' by writing a pamphlet against the medicinal efficacy of the waters.

The moment was critical; the greatness of Bath, which had been slowly declining since the days of Elizabeth, was threatened with extinction when Nash came to it, wealthy, idle, patient, with a genius for organization, and in half a century he made it what he left it when he died in his eighty-ninth year, the most elegant and attractive of the smaller social resorts of Europe. Such a man, let us be certain, was not wholly ridiculous. There must have been something more in him than in a mere idol of the dandies, like Brummell. . . .

Goldsmith, in this second edition at least, has taken more pains with his life of Nash than he ever took again in a biography. His *Parnell*,¹ his *Bolingbroke*,² his *Voltaire*,³ are not worthy of his name and fame; not all the industry of annotators can ever make them more than they were at first—pot-boilers, turned out with no care or enthusiasm, and unconscientiously prepared. But this subtle figure of a Master of Ceremonial; this queer old presentment of a pump-room king, crowned with a white hat, waiting all day long in his best at the bow-

¹ Thomas Parnell (1679-1718), who helped Pope in his translation of Homer's *Iliad*.

² Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751), friend of Swift, Pope and Gay.

³ See page 113.

window of the Smyrna Coffee-House, to get a bow from that other, and alas! better accredited royalty, the Prince of Wales; ¹ this picture of an old beau, with his toy-shop of gold snuff-boxes, his agate rings, his senseless obelisk, his rattle of faded jokes and blunted stories—all this had something very attractive to Goldsmith both in its humour and its pathos; and he has left us, in his *Life of Nash*, a study which is far too little known, but which deserves to rank among the best-read productions of that infinitely sympathetic pen, which has bequeathed to posterity Mr. Tibbs and Moses Primrose and Tony Lumpkin.

From *Gossip in a Library*.

LYTTON STRACHEY

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

EVERY one knows the popular conception of Florence Nightingale. The saintly, self-sacrificing woman, the delicate maiden of high degree who threw aside the pleasures of a life of ease to succour the afflicted, the Lady with the Lamp, gliding through the horrors of the hospital at Scutari, and consecrating with the radiance of her goodness the dying soldier's couch—the vision is familiar to all. But the truth was different. The Miss Nightingale of fact was not as facile fancy painted her. She worked in another fashion, and towards another end; she moved under the stress of an impetus which finds no place in the popular imagination. A Demon possessed her. Now demons, whatever else they may be, are full of interest. And so it happens that in the real Miss Nightingale there was more that was interesting than in

¹ Afterwards George IV.

the legendary one; there was also less that was agreeable.

Her family was extremely well-to-do, and connected by marriage with a spreading circle of other well-to-do families. There was a large country house in Derbyshire; there was another in the New Forest; there were Mayfair rooms for the London season and all its finest parties; there were tours on the Continent with even more than the usual number of Italian operas and of glimpses at the celebrities of Paris. Brought up among such advantages, it was only natural to suppose that Florence would show a proper appreciation of them by doing her duty in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call her—in other words, by marrying, after a fitting number of dances and dinner-parties, an eligible gentleman, and living happily ever afterwards. Her sister, her cousins, all the young ladies of her acquaintance, were either getting ready to do this, or had already done it. It was inconceivable that Florence should dream of anything else; yet dream she did. Ah! To do her duty in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call her! Assuredly she would not be behindhand in doing her duty; but unto what state of life *had* it pleased God to call her? That was the question. God's calls are many, and they are strange. Unto what state of life had it pleased Him to call Charlotte Corday,¹ or Elizabeth of Hungary?² What was that secret voice in her ear, if it was not a call? Why had she felt, from her earliest years, those mysterious promptings towards . . . she hardly knew what, but certainly towards something very different

¹ Charlotte Corday (1768-1793), who killed the French Revolutionist, Marat.

² St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231).

from anything around her? Why, as a child in the nursery, when her sister had shown a healthy pleasure in tearing her dolls to pieces, had *she* shown an almost morbid one in sewing them up again? Why was she driven now to minister to the poor in their cottages, to watch by sick-beds, to put her dog's wounded paw into elaborate splints as if it was a human being? Why was her head filled with queer imaginations of the country house at Embley turned, by some enchantment, into a hospital, with herself as matron moving about among the beds? Why was even her vision of heaven itself filled with suffering patients to whom she was being useful? So she dreamed and wondered, and, taking out her diary, she poured into it the agitations of her soul. And then the bell rang, and it was time to go and dress for dinner.

As the years passed, a restlessness began to grow upon her. She was unhappy, and at last she knew it. Mrs. Nightingale, too, began to notice that there was something wrong. It was very odd; what could be the matter with dear Flo? Mr. Nightingale suggested that a husband might be advisable; but the curious thing was that she seemed to take no interest in husbands. And with her attractions, and her accomplishments too! There was nothing in the world to prevent her making a really brilliant match. But no! She would think of nothing but how to satisfy that singular craving of hers to be *doing* something. As if there was not plenty to do in any case, in the ordinary way, at home. There was the china to look after, and there was her father to be read to after dinner. Mrs. Nightingale could not understand it; and then one day her perplexity was changed to consternation and alarm. Florence announced an extreme

desire to go to Salisbury Hospital for several months as a nurse; and she confessed to some visionary plan of eventually setting up in a house of her own in a neighbouring village, and there founding 'something like a Protestant Sisterhood, without vows, for women of educated feelings.' The whole scheme was summarily brushed aside as preposterous; and Mrs. Nightingale, after the first shock of terror, was able to settle down again more or less comfortably to her embroidery. But Florence, who was now twenty-five, and felt that the dream of her life had been shattered, came near to desperation.

From *Eminent Victorians*.

SIR J. G. FRAZER

SIR ROGER IN THE TEMPLE

THE last time Sir Roger de Coverley was at the club the talk fell, I know not how, on music. 'Who is this Handel,'¹ he asked, 'of whom everybody is speaking? They say he plays divinely on the organ. I should like to hear him.' 'There is nothing easier,' replied the Templar; 'he is to play the organ at the evening service in the Temple Church to-morrow. Will you come? I cannot myself stay for the service, but I will see that you get a good seat.' To this proposal Sir Roger readily assented, and as I lost no opportunity of being with the good old man whenever he was in town, I begged to be allowed to join him. So it was agreed that we should meet on the morrow in the Templar's chambers a little before the hour of service, and that he should conduct us to the church and leave us there. We met next day

¹ George Frederick Handel (1685-1759), the famous composer.

accordingly. I never saw Sir Roger in better health and spirits. He talked gaily, and we fell in with his cheerful mood. We even ventured to rally him on the widow, and he took it in very good part. 'Well, well,' he said, 'I sometimes think she will have me after all. But I begin to grow an old fellow—an old fellow.' We stoutly denied the imputation, and insisted that on the contrary he grew younger every day. Having dissipated the slight shade of melancholy which dimmed for a moment the habitual serenity of our friend, we sallied forth with him to stroll for a little in the garden before repairing to the church.

How well I remember it all now, though years have come and gone since then! It was a calm bright day in September, but already a few yellow leaves were drifting silently to the ground. In the court on which we issued doves were fluttering and cooing, and a fountain was plashing in the dappled shade of some ancient elms. Descending a broad flight of stone steps, we entered the garden. The beds were still gay with the rich hues of autumn, Michaelmas daisies and marigolds vying with the statelier sunflowers and hollyhocks. When we had admired them, 'Come,' said the Templar, 'I will show you *rosa quo locorum sera moretur*.' ¹ He led the way into a little thicket, where sure enough was a rose tree with some red roses still blowing fresh and sweet among the leaves. 'They say, you know,' he reminded us, 'that in this very garden the Princes of York and Lancaster plucked the white and red roses that were to be the badges of their rival houses, and that gave their name to the Wars of the Roses.' 'Aye, aye,' said Sir Roger, 'and the red rose was the fitter emblem of the

¹ The place where the late rose lingers. .

two; for they say that your white rose will never bloom on ground where blood has been spilt. You may plant a white rose tree on a battlefield, but next summer all the roses on it will blow red.'

When we seemed to doubt the truth of this axiom in natural history, Sir Roger earnestly assured us that it was so. 'Why, to prove it,' says he, 'my friend Sir Richard Devereux, of the Life Guards, was with his regiment at the bloody battle of Landen,¹ and next year when he chanced to pass by the place, the whole battlefield was nothing but a great sheet of red poppies. He never saw such a blaze of scarlet in his life, not even at a review in Hyde Park.' 'And then the crimson wall-flower,' said the Templar, willing to chime in with the old man's fancy, 'everybody knows that it is called Bloody Warriors because it grows on fields of blood.' 'To be sure, to be sure,' rejoined Sir Roger, 'in my country it blooms nowhere so well as on the battlefield of Tewkesbury. Many and many a time have I seen it there on a summer's day as I have been riding past. That's the truth. But as for what the poet Herrick says about red roses, I never could believe it.' 'Why, what does he say about them?' we both asked, curious to elicit the knight's opinion on a point of poetry. 'Well, I am not sure that I remember the verses,' he replied, 'though I used to sing them when I was a young man. I learned them from my mother, when she walked with me in the rose garden, and I once sang them there,' he added, dropping his voice and looking grave, 'to *her*.' We knew whom he meant by *her*, and did not press him further. A vision of the rose garden at Coverley Hall, and a summer

¹ Fought in July, 1693, in Holland between the French and the Dutch. English troops took part in the battle on the Dutch side.

twilight, and Sir Roger pacing there with the widow, rose before my mind, and I remained silent. Rousing himself from a reverie into which he had fallen, Sir Roger went on, 'Let me see, let me see,

Roses at first were white—

Oh, yes, I remember them now.' And he recited in lilting tones and a high cracked voice—I think I can hear him now and see him as he stood, with the sunshine on his face, smiling and beating time with his hand:

Roses at first were white,
Till they could not agree
Whether my Sappho's breast
Or they more white should be.

But being vanquished quite,
A blush their cheeks bespread:
Since which, believe the rest,
The roses first came red.

When he had done, the Templar pulled some of the red roses and offered them to Sir Roger, who stuck them in his hat, saying: 'If you will give me a slip of that rose-bush, I will plant it in the garden at Coverley and next summer you shall come and gather the roses. Aye, and I will show you the Bloody Warriors on the field of Tewkesbury too. You will believe me then. I know you gentlemen of the law are hard to persuade. But you shall see for yourself, you shall see for yourself.'

In such discourse we whiled away an idle half-hour till the failing light reminded us that the time of service was at hand. So we quitted the garden and made our way through the darkening courts to the church. In the trees overhead the starlings were settling to roost with a

clamorous chattering, which, Sir Roger told us, was their evensong of praise. Passing through the church porch we entered the oldest part of the ancient edifice, the original round church of the Templars, where the warrior knights lie under their stone effigies on the pavement. Sir Roger and I were putting some questions in a whisper to our friend the Templar concerning these quaint figures, lying there so still after all these ages with their upturned faces and clasped swords, when the organ began to play. So soft and sweet and solemn were the notes that the words died away on our lips, and we followed our friend as he beckoned us forward into the inner part of the church. There he ushered us into a stall beside a pillar and left us. The twilight was now deepening into night, the hour of all the day best fitted to compose the mind to serious thought and the offices of religion. The candles were already lit in the church, but even without their glimmering flames we could still dimly discern the interlacing arches of the vaulted roof, the rows of tall clustered columns, and between them the saints and prophets on the windows, showing in faint splendour of purple and crimson and blue against the dying light of day. The service of our English Church, beautiful at all times, seemed to me doubly beautiful in these surroundings. Above all, the ravishing sweetness of the music was such as I had never heard before. The voices of the choir blent in a sort of seraphic harmony with the deep long-drawn notes of the organ, now pealing out in a storm of triumphant exultation and joy, now dying away, as it seemed, into depths of ineffable distance. It was such music as souls in bliss might make around the throne for ever. Our hearts melted within us, and, conscious of my own unworthiness, I felt like

a lost spirit at the gate of Paradise listening to the angels' song.

When the service was over, we knelt for a few moments side by side, while the solemn strains of the organ, touched by a master's hand, still rolled through the dimly lighted church. As my friend remained somewhat longer than usual at his devotions, I stole a look at him, and seeing him with his silvery hair, his clasped hands, and a look as of rapture on his venerable face, I could not but fancy myself kneeling beside a saint in heaven. We rose solemnized by the scene and by the beautiful service to which we had just listened. When we passed out of the porch it was night and the moon had risen, making, with the dark outlines of the church, its still lighted windows and the painted saints glowing on the panes, a picture which long dwelt in my memory. We walked together in silence to Fleet Street. As he was about to leave me, 'Do you know,' he said, 'I have a fancy that when you and I part for the last time, I should wish it to be just thus.' I was too moved to reply, and could only shake him silently by the hand. He lifted his hat, with the red roses still in it, and walked away. I do not know how it was; perhaps his words had struck a note of foreboding in my mind, but a sense of uneasiness and sadness came over me, and I noticed with a sort of apprehension that the roses in his hat drooped and had lost some of their petals. I stood bareheaded, watching him till he disappeared in the shadows. I never saw him again. It was my last parting with Sir Roger. But I humbly trust that we may meet again in a world beyond the shadows, where roses never fade and friends shall part no more.

From The Gorgon's Head.

GEORGE MEREDITH

MY FATHER

THE soft mild night had a moon behind it somewhere; and here and there a light-blue space of sky showed small rayless stars; the breeze smelt fresh of roots and heath. It was more a May-night than one of February. So strange an aspect had all these quiet hill-lines and larch and fir-tree tops in the half-dark stillness, that the boy's terrors were overlaid and almost subdued by his wonderment; he had never before been out in the night, and he must have feared to cry in it, for his sobs were not loud. On a rise of the park-road where a fir-plantation began, he heard his name called faintly from the house by a woman's voice that he knew to be his aunt Dorothy's. It came after him only once: 'Harry Richmond'; but he was soon out of hearing, beyond the park, among the hollows that run dipping for miles beside the great high-road toward London. Sometimes his father whistled to him, or held him high and nodded a salutation to him, as though they had just discovered one another; and his perpetual accessibility to the influences of spicy sugar-plums, notwithstanding his grief, caused his father to prognosticate hopefully of his future wisdom. So, when obedient to command he had given his father a kiss, the boy fell asleep on his shoulder, ceasing to know that he was a wandering infant: and, if I remember rightly, he dreamed he was in a ship of cinnamon-wood upon a sea that rolled mighty, but smooth immense broad waves, and tore things from things without a sound or a hurt.

That night stands up without any clear traces about it or near it, like the brazen castle of romance round which

the sea-tide flows. My father must have borne me miles along the road; he must have procured food for me; I have an idea of feeling a damp forehead and drinking new milk, and by-and-by hearing a roar of voices or vehicles, and seeing a dog that went alone through crowded streets without a master, doing as he pleased, and stopping every other dog he met. He took his turning, and my father and I took ours. We were in a house that, to my senses, had the smell of dark corners, in a street where all the house-doors were painted black, and shut with a bang. Italian organ-men and milk-men paraded the street regularly, and made it sound hollow to their music. Milk, and no cows anywhere; numbers of people, and no acquaintances among them;—my thoughts were occupied by the singularity of such things.

My father could soon make me forget that I was transplanted; he could act dog, tame rabbit, fox, pony, and a whole nursery collection alive, but he was sometimes absent for days, and I was not of a temper to be on friendly terms with those who were unable to captivate my imagination as he had done. When he was at home I rode him all round the room and upstairs to bed, I lashed him with a whip till he frightened me, so real was his barking; if I said 'Menagerie' he became a caravan of wild beasts; I undid a button of his waistcoat, and it was a lion that made a spring, roaring at me; I pulled his coat-tails and off I went tugging at an old bear that swung a hind leg as he turned, in the queerest way, and then sat up and beating his breast sent out a mew-moan. Our room was richer to me than all the Grange while these performances were going forward. His monkey was almost as wonderful as his bear, only he was too big for it, and was obliged to aim at reality in his representa-

tion of this animal by means of a number of breakages; a defect that brought our landlady on the scene. The enchantment of my father's companionship caused me to suffer proportionately in his absence. During that period of solitude, my nursemaid had to order me to play, and I would stumble about and squat in the middle of the floor, struck suddenly by the marvel of the difference between my present and my other home. My father entered into arrangements with a Punch and Judy man for him to pay me regular morning visits opposite our window; yet here again his genius defeated his kind intentions; for happening once to stand by my side during the progress of the show, he made it so vivid to me by what he said and did, that I saw no fun in it without him: I used to dread the heralding crow of Punch if he was away, and cared no longer for wooden heads being knocked ever so hard.

On Sundays we walked to the cathedral, and this was a day with a delight of its own for me. He was never away on the Sunday. Both of us attired in our best, we walked along the streets hand in hand; my father led me before the cathedral monuments, talking in a low tone of British victories, and commending the heroes to my undivided attention. I understood very early that it was my duty to imitate them. While we remained in the cathedral he talked of glory and Old England, and dropped his voice in the middle of a murmured chant to introduce Nelson's name or some other great man's; and this recurred regularly. 'What are we for now?' he would ask me as we left our house. I had to decide whether we took a hero or an author, which I soon learnt to do with capricious resolution. We were one Sunday for Shakespeare; another for Nelson or Pitt. 'Nelson, papa,' was my most

frequent rejoinder, and he never dissented, but turned his steps toward Nelson's cathedral dome, and uncovered his head there, and said: 'Nelson, then, to-day'; and we went straight to his monument to perform the act of homage. I chose Nelson in preference to the others because near bed-time in the evening my father told me stories of our hero of the day, and neither Pitt nor Shakespeare lost an eye, or an arm, or fought with a huge white bear on the ice to make himself interesting. I named them occasionally out of compassion, and to please my father, who said that they ought to have a turn. They were, he told me, in the habit of paying him a visit, whenever I had particularly neglected them, to learn the grounds for my disregard of their claims, and they urged him to intercede with me, and imparted many of their unpublished adventures, so that I should be tempted to give them a chance on the following Sunday.

From *The Adventures of Harry Richmond*.

BIRDS AND BEASTS

W. H. HUDSON

THE PUMA

THE puma is, with the exception of some monkeys, the most playful animal in existence. The young of all the Felidæ spend a large portion of their time in characteristic gambols; the adults, however, acquire a grave and dignified demeanour, only the female playing on occasions with her offspring; but this she always does with a certain formality of manner, as if the relaxation were indulged in not spontaneously, but for the sake of the young and as being a necessary part of their education. Some writer has described the lion's assumption of gaiety as more grim than its most serious moods. The puma at heart is always a kitten, taking unmeasured delight in its frolics, and when, as often happens, one lives alone in the desert, it will amuse itself by the hour fighting mock battles or playing at hide-and-seek with imaginary companions, and lying in wait and putting all its wonderful strategy in practice to capture a passing butterfly. Azara kept a young male for four months, which spent its whole time playing with the slaves. This animal, he says, would not refuse any food offered to it; but when not hungry it would bury the meat in the sand, and when inclined to eat dig it up, and, taking it to the water-trough, wash it clean. I have only known one puma kept as a pet,

and this animal, in seven or eight years, had never shown a trace of ill-temper. When approached, he would lie down, purring loudly, and twist himself about a person's legs, begging to be caressed. A string or handkerchief drawn about was sufficient to keep him in a happy state of excitement for an hour; and when one person was tired of playing with him he was ready for a game with the next comer.

I was told by a person who had spent most of his life on the pampas¹ that on one occasion, when travelling in the neighbourhood of Cape Corrientes, his horse died under him, and he was compelled to continue his journey on foot, burdened with his heavy native horse-gear. At night he made his bed under the shelter of a rock, on the slope of a stony sierra²; a bright moon was shining, and about nine o'clock in the evening four pumas appeared, two adults with their two half-grown young. Not feeling the least alarm at their presence, he did not stir; and after a while they began to gambol together close to him, concealing themselves from each other among the rocks, just as kittens do, and frequently while pursuing one another leaping over him. He continued watching them until past midnight, then fell asleep, and did not wake until morning, when they had left him.

This man was an Englishman by birth, but having gone very young to South America he had taken kindly to the semi-barbarous life of the gauchos,³ and had imbibed all their peculiar notions, one of which is that human life is not worth very much. 'What does it matter?' they often say, and shrug their shoulders, when told of a comrade's death; 'so many beautiful horses die!' I asked him if he had ever killed a puma, and he replied that he

¹ The plains.

² Mountain.

³ Cowboys.

had killed only one, and had sworn never to kill another. He said that while out one day with another gaucho looking for cattle a puma was found. It sat up with its back against a stone, and did not move even when his companion threw the noose of his lasso over its neck. My informant then dismounted, and, drawing his knife, advanced to kill it; still the puma made no attempt to free itself from the lasso, but it seemed to know, he said, what was coming, for it began to tremble, the tears ran from its eyes, and it whined in the most pitiful manner. He killed it as it sat there unresisting before him, but after accomplishing the deed felt that he had committed a murder. It was the only thing he had ever done in his life, he added, which filled him with remorse when he remembered it. This I thought a rather startling declaration, as I knew that he had killed several individuals of his own species in duels, fought with knives, in the fashion of the gauchos.

All who have killed or witnessed the killing of the puma—and I have questioned scores of hunters on this point—agree that it resigns itself in this unresisting, pathetic manner to death at the hands of man. Claudio Gay, in his *Natural History of Chili*, says, 'When attacked by man its energy and daring at once forsake it, and it becomes a weak, inoffensive animal, and trembling, and uttering piteous moans, and shedding abundant tears, it seems to implore compassion from a generous enemy.' The enemy is not often generous; but many gauchos have assured me, when speaking on this subject, that although they kill the puma readily to protect their domestic animals, they consider it an evil thing to take its life in desert places, where it is man's only friend among the wild animals.

When the hunter is accompanied by dogs, then the puma, instead of drooping and shedding tears, is roused to a sublime rage: its hair stands erect; its eyes shine like balls of green flame; it spits and snarls like a furious tom cat. The hunter's presence seems at such times to be ignored altogether, its whole attention being given to the dogs and its rage directed against them. In Patagonia a sheep-farming Scotchman, with whom I spent some days, showed me the skulls of five pumas which he had shot in the vicinity of his ranche. One was of an exceptionally large individual, and I here relate what he told me of his encounter with this animal, as it shows just how the puma almost invariably behaves when attacked by man and dogs. He was out on foot with his flock, when the dogs discovered the animal concealed among the bushes. He had left his gun at home, and having no weapon, and finding that the dogs dared not attack it where it sat in a defiant attitude with its back against a thorny bush, he looked about and found a large dry stick, and going boldly up to it tried to stun it with a violent blow on the head. But though it never looked at him, its fiery eyes gazing steadily at the dogs all the time, he could not hit it, for with a quick side movement it avoided every blow. The small heed the puma paid him, and the apparent ease with which it avoided his best-aimed blows, only served to rouse his spirit, and at length striking with increased force his stick came to the ground and was broken to pieces. For some moments he now stood within two yards of the animal perfectly defenceless and not knowing what to do. Suddenly it sprang past him, actually brushing against his arm with its side, and began pursuing the dogs round and round among the bushes. In the end my informant's partner

appeared on the scene with his rifle, and the puma was shot.

In encounters of this kind the most curious thing is that the puma steadfastly refuses to recognize an enemy in man, although it finds him acting in concert with its hated canine foe, about whose hostile intentions it has no such delusion. . . .

I inquired of the comandante, and of others, whether any case had come to their knowledge in that district in which the puma had shown anything beyond a mere passive friendliness towards man; in reply they related the following incident, which had occurred at the Saladillo a few years before my visit: The men all went out one day beyond the frontier to form a *cerca*, as it is called, to hunt ostriches and other game. The hunters, numbering about thirty, spread themselves round in a vast ring and, advancing towards the centre, drove the animals before them. During the excitement of the chase which followed, while they were all engaged in preventing the ostriches, deer, etc., from doubling back and escaping, it was not noticed that one of the hunters had disappeared; his horse, however, returned to its home during the evening, and on the next morning a fresh hunt for the lost man was organized. He was eventually found lying on the ground with a broken leg, where he had been thrown at the beginning of the hunt. He related that an hour after it had become dark a puma appeared and sat near him, but did not seem to notice him. After a while it became restless, frequently going away and returning, and finally it kept away so long, that he thought it had left him for good. About midnight he heard the deep roar of a jaguar and gave himself up for lost. By raising himself on his elbow he was able to see

the outline of the beast crouching near him, but its face was turned from him and it appeared to be intently watching some object on which it was about to spring. Presently it crept out of sight, then he heard snarlings and growlings and the sharp yell of a puma, and he knew that the two beasts were fighting. Before morning he saw the jaguar several times, but the puma renewed the contest with it again and again until morning appeared, after which he saw and heard no more of them.

Extraordinary as this story sounds, it did not seem so to me when I heard it, for I had already met with many anecdotes of a similar nature in various parts of the country, some of them vastly more interesting than the one I have just narrated; only I did not get them at first hand, and am consequently not able to vouch for their accuracy; but in this case it seemed to me that there was really no room for doubt. All that I had previously heard had compelled me to believe that the puma really does possess a unique instinct of friendliness for man, the origin of which, like that of many other well-known instincts of animals, must remain a mystery. The fact that the puma never makes an unprovoked attack on a human being, or eats human flesh, and that it refuses, except in some very rare cases, even to defend itself, does not seem really less wonderful in an animal of its bold and sanguinary temper than that it should follow the traveller in the wilderness, or come near him when he lies sleeping or disabled, and even occasionally defend him from its enemy the jaguar. We know that certain sounds, colours, or smells, which are not particularly noticed by most animals, produce an extraordinary effect on some species; and it is possible to believe, I think, that the human form or countenance, or the odour of the

human body, may also have the effect on the puma of suspending its predatory instincts and inspiring it with a gentleness towards man, which we are only accustomed to see in our domesticated carnivores or in feral animals towards those of their own species. Wolves, when pressed with hunger, will sometimes devour a fellow wolf; as a rule, however, rapacious animals will starve to death rather than prey on one of their own kind, nor is it a common thing for them to attack other species possessing instincts similar to their own. The puma, we have seen, violently attacks other large carnivores, not to feed on them, but merely to satisfy its animosity; and, while respecting man, it is, within the tropics, a great hunter and eater of monkeys, which of all animals most resemble men. We can only conclude with Humboldt¹ that there is something mysterious in the hatreds and affections of animals.

From *The Naturalist in La Plata*.

R. W. G. HINGSTON

INTELLIGENCE IN ANTS

WE have arrived at this conclusion. The insect is not a blind automaton. There is a ray of conscious thought running through its whole life.

This view, I fear, will meet with opposition. To Bethe² the insect is a thoughtless automaton; to Loeb³ it is only another kind of plant; to Lefroy⁴ it is a machine

¹ Alexander, Baron von Humboldt (1769-1859), German naturalist.

² Albrecht Bethe (b. 1872), German physiologist.

³ Jacques Loeb (1859-1924), German biologist.

⁴ H. M. Lefroy (1877-1925), English entomologist.

without emotion; to Fabre¹ it is just a shade over the mechanical, possessed of a something which he calls *Discernment*, yet, withal, an extreme conservative, 'learning nothing, forgetting nothing,' and without the slightest gleam of reason.

It is necessary, therefore, to establish our position, and demonstrate Intelligence in insect life.

We begin with the ants.

Their Intelligence as Excavators

The ordinary plan of excavation is for ants to carry out earth and pitch it outside the nest. There is nothing particular to note about it. All the ants engaged at the task behave in the same way.

But now and again we meet with an incident where the ants behave in an unusual manner and in doing so show remarkable judgment.

For instance, *Messor barbarus*, the Indian harvester, digs its nest on the ordinary plan. But one day I met with a deviation. Nine ants were making a nest which was situated on a slope. The earth which they brought out was piled into a heap, flat on top but precipitous in front. Of the nine ants, eight were diggers. These eight carried out the earth and laid it on the flat top of the heap. The ninth ant behaved differently. It never went into the nest for earth, but remained on the top of the heap close to the edge of the precipice. Its business was altogether different from the others'. For as fast as the eight put their loads on the heap, this particular ant picked up each load and pitched it over the brink of the precipice. Thus it was clear that the making of the heap was the duty of this particular ant.

¹ Jean-Henri Fabre (1823-1915), French naturalist.

Other illustrations of this relay system have been met with in the American Tropics. Bates¹ describes the excavations of *Eciton legionis*. One set of excavators carried up earth; their comrades, 'with an appearance of forethought that quite staggered him,' relieved them of their burdens, and carried them a sufficient distance from the hole to prevent them falling back again.

Belt² forced a nest of *Ecodoma* to migrate. The ants, however, during the migration, did not carry their burdens in the usual way. There happened to be a slope on their line of march. See the effect it had on the ants. They divided themselves into two parties. One party took the loads to the top of the slope, and from there rolled them down to the bottom. The other party kept at the foot of the slope, picked up the fallen loads and carried them to the new nest.

Now, can we explain these co-ordinated actions in terms of instinctive impulse? I cannot believe it. I need not discuss Belt's example. The intelligence employed is so glaringly obvious. But take the nine ants making the heap. Eight were diggers: one was a heap-maker. The plan of work was quite unusual. As a rule all the excavators both carry out earth and construct the heap. But then, in this case, their heap was unusual. It was flat on top and precipitous in front, the unusual shape being due to the fact that the nest was situated on a slope. It was in order to meet the unusual situation that the ants had changed their ordinary method, and had assigned to one particular ant the shaping and general construction of the heap.

¹ William Bates (1825-1892), author of *The Naturalist on the Amazons*.

² Thomas Belt (1832-1878), author of *A Naturalist in Nicaragua*.

In the Himalaya I came across a better example. *Myrmecocystus setipes* is a powerful ant which was active at a height of 4,000 feet. It had made a nest on the side of a bank. The ejected earth ran down from it in a shoot, like a landslide on the face of a hill. The shoot was very steep and crumbling, and as each ant carried out its load, it slipped on the loose material and tumbled down to the bottom of the slope. The ants, however, refused to be defeated. After some days of slipping and falling they managed to devise an ingenious plan of getting over this serious difficulty. They assigned to one particular ant the duty of consolidating and hardening the ground. This ant set about collecting pebbles which it found near the foot of the shoot. These pebbles it carried up the shoot and spread them out in the form of a platform at the very top of the shoot, that is just outside the mouth of the nest.

This was tremendous labour for one ant. The carrying of the pebbles up the slippery shoot was a task that lasted several days. It required all the labourer's strength, and caused it innumerable falls. It was interesting to see selection at work. The ant never took the first pebble that offered. Several were examined, picked up and tested, until one was met with that fitted the job. Moreover it did not place its pebbles haphazard; it carefully found a suitable spot for the fitting of each load. The final result was a platform of pebbles on which the excavators walked easily, and no more of them fell down the slope.

Can we deny intelligence to this? Is this the action of an automaton, a thing that works blindly like a machine? Is this the mere reflex activity of Bethe or the plant-like behaviour of Loeb? Of course it isn't. Intelligence runs

all through the act. There is *divergence* from accustomed habits; there is *choice* in the selection of pebbles; there is *design* in the making of the platform; there is the final *end in view*, and one very much to the advantage of the ants.

I can no more deny intelligence to this act than I can to a man who builds a parapet to prevent people tumbling down a hill.

It is important for excavating ants that the excavated earth should not fall back on them. For this reason they either carry it away a little distance or pile it up in some suitable shape. These, of course, are instinctive activities. The earth is disposed of on a racial plan. The ants continue the instinctive method which their ancestors employed before them. But sometimes we meet with intelligent adaptations. I suspect this of *Myrmecocystus setipes*. I once saw it putting pebbles round its nest which looked as if a wall was being built to prevent earth from tumbling in. What confirms me in this is an observation by Donisthorpe. He found a nest of *Donisthorpea nigra* situated in the sand dunes at Tenby. The colony had made an unusual adaptation, one specially suited to its sandy surroundings. It had built a sand-crater at the entrance to its nest, without doubt in order to prevent loose sand from being blown into the nest by the wind. Again we have an unusual deviation with a highly advantageous end in view. The deviation cannot be instinctive. It is not these ants' instinct to make craters. In the sandy tract they did it designedly, in order to secure a distinct gain. It was not instinct but reason that built it. Yet that is exactly, according to Fabre, what the ant is unable to do. 'We

can get them to give us an enormous cone of earth, an instinctive piece of work, but we shall never obtain the juxtaposition of three grains of sand, a reasoned bit of work.' I maintain that the crater built at Tenby is a reasoned work of juxtaposition.

From *Problems of Instinct and Intelligence*.

LORD AVEBURY

MY WASPS

MY wasps, though courageous, were always on the alert and easily startled. It was, for instance, more difficult to paint them than the bees; nevertheless, though I tried them with a set of tuning-forks covering three octaves, with a shrill whistle, a pipe, a violin, and my own voice, making in each case the loudest and shrillest sounds in my power, I could see no symptoms in any case that they were conscious of the noise.

The following fact struck me as rather remarkable. One of my wasps smeared her wings with syrup, so that she could not fly. When this happened to a bee, it was only necessary to carry her to the alighting-board, when she was soon cleaned by her comrades. But I did not know where this wasp's nest was, and therefore could not pursue a similar course with her. At first, then, I was afraid that she was doomed. I thought, however, that I would wash her, fully expecting, indeed, to terrify her so much that she would not return again. I therefore caught her, put her in a bottle half full of water, and shook her up well till the honey was washed off. • I then transferred her to another bottle, and put her in the sun to dry. When she appeared to have recovered I let

her out: she at once flew to her nest, and I never expected to see her again. To my surprise, in thirteen minutes the brave little insect returned as if nothing had happened, and continued her visits to the honey all the afternoon.

This experiment interested me so much that I repeated it with another marked wasp, this time, however, keeping the wasp in the water till she was quite motionless and insensible. When taken out of the water she soon recovered; I fed her; she went quietly away to her nest as usual, and returned after the usual absence. The next morning this wasp was the first to visit the honey.

I was not able to watch any of the above-mentioned wasps for more than a few days, but I kept a specimen of *Polistes gallica* for no less than nine months.

I took her, with her nest, in the Pyrenees, early in May. The nest consisted of about twenty cells, the majority of which contained an egg; but as yet no grubs had been hatched out, and, of course, my wasp was as yet alone in the world.

I had no difficulty in inducing her to feed on my hand; but at first she was shy and nervous. She kept her sting in constant readiness; and once or twice in the train, when the railway officials came for tickets, and I was compelled to hurry her back into her bottle, she stung me slightly—I think, however, entirely from fright.

Gradually she became quite used to me, and when I took her on my hand apparently expected to be fed. She even allowed me to stroke her without any appearance of fear, and for some months I never saw her sting.

When the cold weather came on she fell into a drowsy state, and I began to hope she would hibernate and survive the winter. I kept her in a dark place, but watched her carefully, and fed her if ever she seemed at all restless.

She came out occasionally, and seemed as well as usual till near the end of February, when one day I observed she had nearly lost the use of her antennæ, though the rest of the body was as usual. She would take no food. Next day I tried again to feed her; but the head seemed dead, though she could still move her legs, wings, and abdomen. The following day I offered her food for the last time; but both head and thorax were dead or paralysed; she could but move her tail, a last token, as I could almost fancy, of gratitude and affection. As far as I could judge, her death was quite painless; and she now occupies a place in the British Museum.

From *Ants, Bees, and Wasps*.

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD

DUDLEY AND GILDEROY

AND while the two uninvited guests was thus each minding his own business in his own quiet way, behaving admirably, the Tea Party in the flat below began to move. The table was spread, the guests arrived, Mrs. de Mumbles receiving them, the flood of conversation roared. To Dudley, listening, it was like the roar he once knew on the parrot's peak in Princes Island, when the whole vast spread of his native forest, stretching to the sky, echoed with the squawking, screaming concourse of collective speech.

His cage was placed where all could see him, and the story of his capture, exaggerated out of all recognition, was given over and over again, gaining new detail with each repetition. He had, apparently, bitten the porter, made countless eloquent remarks, had whistled, sung,

spoken several languages, and, since he was now happy and comfortable, had obviously escaped from a home where he was not kindly treated. Dudley, the Grey King Parrot with the red tail, was admired, petted, coaxed to speak, then abused for his obstinate silence, by numerous visitors of either sex.

'Why should he talk if he doesn't want to?' said a big, eye-glassed man from one of the embassies.

'They know when they're well off,' commented a lady. 'They're uncanny birds. My husband once . . .' and she slipped into an interminable and pointless story about a bird that proved to have been, after all, a mere cockatoo.

'They live for ages,' remarked another, 'some say for a thousand years——'

'And no one,' interrupted a third, 'ever knows their sex, I'm told.'

'Because both sexes lay eggs,' commented a fourth, 'even in captivity.'

'It's lucky you don't keep a cat, Mrs. de Mumbles,' from a fifth, 'proverbial enemies, aren't they?'

Dudley, listening to the chorus of chat that never ceased, gave no sign that he did so. Aware that he was the observed of all observers, he remained adorable, but silent. He kept himself to himself; it was quite enough that he offered himself for admiration. Mute and dignified, he watched the game, the one unpardonable fault in which, he noticed, was to be without speech. To have nothing to say was unforgivable. The players, even when they said nothing, always talked, and it was better to talk all at once than not to utter anything. Yet Dudley, if superior, did not emphasize it; if bored, he did not show it. He watched ringed fingers thrust tentatively between the bars; heard female voices assume

a childish babbling tone as though they addressed a baby in its perambulator; listened also to numerous remarks about parrots in general, and about himself in particular that showed abysmal ignorance, yet he betrayed no hint of what he thought about it all. If depressed and weary, he mastered himself and the situation in this happy way—by an impenetrable silence that was not without its grandeur.

Occasionally, without visibly moving his beak, he gabbled to himself, but so low that his '*adnauseamadnauseamadnauseam*'¹ was not audible; and beyond this heavenly gabble he uttered no single sound—nor meant to until the right moment had arrived, and this right moment, it turned out, was the tail of the noisy over-crowded party.

The majority of the guests had left; the rest hovered in the narrow hall over endlessly lingering good-byes. These, as in his own practice, should have been brief, effective, neat, but this final little group made them verbose, incoherent, silly. A good exit-sentence seemed beyond them, they hovered over mumbled insincerities; the bow-out smile of their hostess, produced at the wrong moment, became a set grimace, so that Dudley, watching the prolonged performance, having already disliked the entire gathering, now positively felt loathing for its disappearing tail. Would it never end, this wriggling, noisy tail?

With the dignity due to perfect inner and outer poise, he observed the wearisome detail from the middle of his perch, his head cocked a trifle sideways, eyes boldly glittering, alert but undemonstrative. 'I,' his attitude

¹ *ad nauseam* (three times repeated), meaning (literally) 'to the point of disgust' and in general 'too much of' anything.

suggested, 'when I've had enough, just withdraw with my little bow and my kindly smile. If I add a word, it is a brief one, plain perhaps, but courteous. And on this, I retire!'

Several of these guests included him in their long farewells, waving a hand, a glove, or tweaking the bars of his cage. He was voted a 'fine bird, but uninteresting because he wouldn't perform.' A performance, certainly, he had not granted, for like any other artist he was not to be won too easily. Thus, only at the eleventh hour did he grant his favours to the late group in the hall, considering that the right moment had come at last.

He now, therefore, suddenly produced one of his best numbers with startling abruptness, entirely unprovoked, and without a hint of warning. So unexpected was it, indeed, that the women sprang back, taken completely by surprise. One of them screamed, a second stopped her ears and shut her eyes tightly but left her mouth wide open. The others, male and female, gasped and stared. Dudley, as intended, had made a really great impression.

His opening note was a penetrating shriek of such violence that the rubbish and bric-à-brac hanging on the walls positively rattled. This piercing shriek, rising and falling, was repeated seven times, and immediately following it, but in gentler and more musical tones, came the syllables he loved so dearly:

'Gilder-roy! Gilder-roy! Gilder-roy!'

There was affection in the voice, there was longing, passion, there was a note of summons, but there was a note of warning, too. Seven times in rapid succession the lordly bird produced this poignant call.

And the owner of the name, having long since left his

dizzy edge and now biding his time in a cramped space beneath a plush sofa, heard it, and knew his hour had struck. His friend had not forgotten, much less failed him. It was the psychological moment for his introduction. His uncanny instinct guided him infallibly. If he now showed himself it must be obvious to all that he was the parrot's friend, and as a result he would not be kicked out into the street. On the contrary, he would be welcomed. He decided to act.

Gilderoy, therefore, in all his ginger frightfulness, puffed cheeks, torn ears, sprayed whiskers, flat skull, lean skinny back and unkempt tail—Gilderoy, in his blaze of auburn beauty, his patched eye squinting more than ever—emerged. He came into full view, marched across the hall, neatly picking his way between brown and buckled shoes, leaped soundlessly on to the table where the cage stood and then, to the amazement of everybody, deftly inserted a velvet paw between the bars within easy reach of the parrot's deadly mandibles.

There was a collective gasp. There was a hush of admiration.

It was a signal for a fresh outburst of human voices. Surprise, laughter, approval and dismay, each had its turn. One lady, subject to catphobia, stifled a scream and took her departure instantly, hardly finding breath to say good-bye; a second having already collapsed upon a broken chair, collapsed upon it again; others cried loudly: 'A cat! A red cat! There's going to be a fight!' and asked where it came from.

Gilderoy's move, that is, produced exactly the impression he had calculated.

'Why, I do believe they know each other!' cried a discerning artist in a stock collar. 'Gilderoy, of course,

must be the cat's name. Look at them, will you? Just look at them!

'Don't touch them! Don't interfere!' exclaimed others. 'Just watch!'

For Dudley, faithful comrade that he was, rose gallantly to the occasion. He had known the warning call would reach the cat no matter where he hid, and his friend's trick was plain as day to him. He did not fail that friend now. Ashamed, perhaps, of his ruffianly appearance among these well-dressed folk, he played the game. 'Dudley,' as he loved to assure himself, 'is not a snob.'

When the velvet paw, therefore, came toward him through the bars, he gazed down at it with a moment or two of careful contemplation, then edged delicately along the perch until he reached it, lowered his dangerous beak very slowly, felt the paw with a tiny rubbing motion to and fro, and—tenderly kissed it.

'Good-bye for the present,' he then remarked in a quiet version of the Vicar's voice, but so low that no one seemed to hear him. The chorus, besides, drowned all except the most penetrating tones. The entire group applauded, the men drawing attention to the fact that the animals were obviously, if mysteriously, good friends, the women giving birth to expressions of ecstatic adoration that betrayed the maternal instinct lurking even in the dimmest females. During which, Red Gilderoy, dropping smartly from the table, arched his ugly back, stiffened his skinny tail into a ramrod, lifted his patched eye heavenwards and, purring loudly, began to rub himself affectionately to and fro against his hostess's pink silk stockings.

From Dudley and Gilderoy.

HENRY WILLIAMSON

TARKA'S ESCAPE

TARKA¹ sank all but his nostrils in a pool and waited. He lay in the sunlit water like a brown log slanting to the stones on which his rudder² rested. The huntsman saw him. Tarka lifted his whiskered head out of the water, and stared at the huntsman. Hounds were speaking just below. From the pool the stream flowed for six feet down the smooth slide up which he had crept. When Deadlock³ jumped into the pool and lapped the scent lying on the water, Tarka put down his head with hardly a ripple, and like a skin of brown oil moved under the hound's belly. Soundlessly he emerged, and the sun glistened on his water-sleeked coat as he walked down on the algæ-smeared rock. He seemed to walk under their muzzles slowly, and to be treading on their feet.

Let hounds hunt him! Don't help hounds or they'll chop him!

The pack was confused. Every hound owned the scent, which was like a tangled line, the end of which was sought for unravelling. But soon Deadlock pushed through the pack and told the way the otter had gone.

As Tarka was running over shillets,⁴ with water scarcely deep enough to cover his rudder, Deadlock saw him and with stiff stern⁵ ran straight at him. Tarka quitted the water. The dead twigs and leaves at the hedge-bottom crackled and rustled as he pushed through to the meadow. While he was running over the grass, he could hear the voice of Deadlock raging as the bigger black-

¹ Tarka was an otter. ² Tail. ³ The leader of the hounds.

⁴ Small flat stones.

⁵ Tail.

and-white hound struggled through the hazel twigs and brambles and honeysuckle bines. He crossed fifty yards of meadow, climbed the bank, and ran down again on to a tarred road. The surface burned his pads, but he ran on, and even when an immense crimson creature bore down upon him he did not go back into the meadow across which hounds were streaming. With a series of shudders the crimson creature slowed to a standstill, while human figures rose out of it, and pointed. He ran under the motor-coach, and came out into brown sunshine, hearing above the shouts of men the clamour of hounds trying to scramble up the high bank and pulling each other down in their eagerness.

He ran in the shade of the ditch, among bits of newspaper, banana and orange skins, cigarette ends and crushed chocolate boxes. A long yellow creature grew bigger and bigger before him, and women rose out of it and peered down at him as he passed it. With smarting eyes he ran two hundred yards of the road, which for him was a place of choking stinks and hurtful noises. Pausing in the ditch, he harkened to the clamour changing its tone as hounds leaped down into the road. He ran on for another two hundred yards, then climbed the bank, pushed through dusty leaves and grasses and briars that would hold him, and down the sloping meadow to the stream. He splashed into the water and swam until rocks and boulders rose before him. He climbed and walked over them. His rudder drawn on mosses and lichens left a strong scent behind him. Deadlock, racing over the green-shadowed grassland, threw his tongue before the pack.

In the water, through shallow and pool, his pace was steady, but not hurried; he moved faster than the stream;

he insinuated himself from slide to pool, from pool to boulder, leaving his scent in the wet marks of his pads and rudder.

People were running through the meadow, and in the near distance arose the notes of the horn and hoarse cries. Hounds' tongues broke out united and firm, and Tarka knew that they had reached the stream. The sun-laden water of the pools was spun into eddies by the thrusts of his webbed hindlegs. He passed through shadow and dapple, through runnel and splash. The water sparkled amber in the sunbeams, and his brown sleek pelt glistened whenever his back made ripples. His movements in water were unhurried, like an eel's. The hounds came nearer.

The stream after a bend flowed near the roadway, where more motor-cars were drawn up. Some men and women, holding notched poles, were watching from the cars—sportsmen on wheels.

Beggars' Roost Bridge was below. With hounds so near Tarka was heedless of the men that leaned over the stone parapet, watching for him. They shouted, waved hats, and cheered the hounds. There were ducks above the bridge, quacking loudly as they left the stream and waddled to the yard, and when Tarka came to where they had been, he left the water and ran after them. They beat their wings as they tried to fly from him, but he reached the file and scattered them, running through them and disappearing. Nearer and nearer came Dead-lock, with Captain and Waterwitch leading the pack. Huntsman, whippers-in, and field were left behind, struggling through hedges and over banks.

Hounds were bewildered when they reached the yard. They ran with noses to ground in puzzled excitement.

Captain's shrill voice told that Tarka had gone under a gate. Waterwitch followed the wet seals in the dust, but turned off along a track of larger webs. The line was tangled again. Deadlock threw his belying tongue. Other hounds followed, but the scent led only to a duck that beat its wings and quacked in terror before them. A man with a rake drove them off, shouting and threatening to strike them. Dewdrop spoke across the yard and the hounds galloped to her, but the line led to a gate which they tried to leap, hurling themselves up and falling from the top bar. A duck had gone under the gate, but not Tarka.

All scent was gone. Hounds rolled in the dust or trotted up to men and women, sniffing their pockets for food. Rufus found a rabbit skin and ate it; Render fought with Sandboy—but not seriously, as they feared each other; Deadlock went off alone. And hounds were waiting for a lead when the sweating huntsman, grey pot-hat pushed back from his red brow, ran up with the two whippers-in and called them into a pack again. The thick scent of the Muscovy ducks had checked the hunt.

From Tarka the Otter.

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STELLA BENSON

THE HUMOUR OF THE ELEPHANT

I WENT on a Christmas visit to eleven elephants in Rajputana. I had never met an elephant as man to man—or elephant to elephant—before, except, of course, in the Zoo, where they are rather consciously exotic. But there

in the jungle in Rajputana, nothing was allowed to be exotic—not even the jewelled Maharajah, into the radius of whose immense hospitality I was accidentally swept. Our gorgeous camp, which had a hint of old leisurely pretty battlefields about it, the glittering turbaned soldier at the door of each frilled and painted tent, the huge tall wagonette drawn by two trotting camels, the cramped, mazy, romantic ways of the castle, the little yellow capital city of the kingdom . . . none of these were exotic, boxed in, as they were, by that clear burning sky and that infinite round horizon. Large bald-faced, wistful monkeys stood out conspicuously against the low yellow wilderness that—in Rajputana—is called the jungle; blackbuck and nilgai¹ frequented the near horizon unashamed; jackals sat as publicly as dogs in the shade of shrivelled shrubs, and as for the peacocks and the kingfishers and the hoopoes, they took upon themselves the duty of flowers in that sad, unbounded garden.

So that when, for the first time, I motored to a meet with the intention of watching falcons and a tame lynx bring hares or tigers—(and what not)—to my feet, it did not seem fantastic to find myself surrounded by a high wall of benevolent elephant faces. I don't know anybody else with such a humorous face as an elephant; each of its little eyes is set in a wreath of smiles, and when it lies down to let you mount—forelegs straight out forward, back legs straight out backward—it is a sort of idealized Fatty Arbuckle.

I chose my mount for the hunt, a small, merry elephant with a kind of antimacassar painted in scarlet on its brow. I climbed on to its obligingly recumbent form by means of a ladder and sat on a canvas pad, holding on desperately

¹ Antelope.

to the waistbelt of a liveried minion who sat astride of the elephant's neck wielding a bi-dent—(if there is no such word as bi-dent—why not?). My elephant had a playful way of trumpeting through a madly agitated trunk when it was either bored or excited. The sound was rather like changing gears on a Ford car, and the result was that passers-by were soaked to the skin.

The field consisted of about forty guests, some mounted on horses, some on ponies, and some on elephants. The elephant contingent was subdivided into olders and wisers, sitting in furnished pavilions on tall, slow elephants of the super-dreadnought type, and youngers and silliers like me, who took the destroyers' part in the fleet, rattling up and down on the saddles of little rampageous elephants-made-for-two. There was also the Maharajah, carrying a handsome eagle-like bird on his wrist, and a large number of minions, carrying hooded hawks, and an ox-cart, carrying an irascible-looking blindfolded lynx. The ox-cart hurried industriously after the hunt, but always arrived too late, to the increasing annoyance of the lynx.

Whenever the hawks were released, the whole field cheered loudly. Perhaps this well-meant encouragement disconcerted the hawks, for, although the ground was knee-deep in game—hares, partridges and deer splashing on all sides from under our charging feet—the birds either glued themselves to the sky, or else flew straight to the highest tree in sight and sat on it, moodily putting their feathers in order. Nearly all our time was spent in luring sulky hawks from trees by means of false decoy-birds flapped about the ground with string. The elephants were much more keen, running heavily after every hare they saw and trying to soar after the soaring part-

ridges. My elephant nervously uprooted and stuffed into its mouth young shrubs as it thundered along, trumpeting breathlessly between mouthfuls. I was sorry that no hare was sporting enough to allow itself to be caught by these means.

Trying to forget its empty bag, my elephant led the stately procession home at sunset through the little yellow, sandy town that is the capital of our Maharajah's kingdom. In the torchlit booths the citizens bowed and blessed the procession in slow sing-song. The proud, prudish faces of the camels seemed to boast of their gaudy burdens as they passed us; little dusty children, naked except for silver anklets, asked for alms in high, metallic voices and, outside a temple, two fierce, urgent bells rang one against the other.

I watched the elephants in lighter vein next day running a race. Their riders were mostly nervous amateurs, who knew no word of elephant language, and saw no difference between *Hut*¹ and *Hell*.² (If this should meet the eye of an elephant, I hope he will excuse my spelling, which is purely phonetic.) The elephants smiled in a long row but, smile they never so wisely, they entirely failed to grasp the theory of the entertainment. They thought that they were taking part in a kind of royal musical ride, and when, at the sound of the pistol shot, they moved forward with serene dignity, not even the babel of shrieks and curses from the amateurs on their backs could induce them to fall out of line. In a perfect row they started, in a perfect row they proceeded very slowly along the track, pensively waving their trunks to keep one another in step; in a perfect row they breasted the tape at the other end. And then they all sighed

¹ Go back.

² Go on.

happily, satisfied to feel that they had done their duty. It was the most impressive race I ever saw.

From *The Little World*.

DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI

LEARNING TO FLY

By the time he was five weeks old he could hop out of his birth-nest and take a drink from the pan of water left near the pigeon holes. Even now he had to be fed by his parents, though every day he tried to get food on his own account. He would sit on my wrist and dig up a seed at a time from the palm of my hand. He juggled it two or three times in his throat like a juggler throwing up balls in the air, and swallowed it. Every time Gay-Neck did that, he turned his head and looked into my eyes as much as to say: 'Am I not doing it well? You must tell my parents how clever I am when they come down from sunning themselves on the roof.' All the same, he was the slowest of my pigeons in developing his powers.

Just at this time I made a discovery. I never knew before how pigeons could fly in a dust storm without going blind. But as I watched the ever-growing Gay-Neck I noticed one day that a film was drawn over his eyes. I thought he was losing his sight. In my consternation I put forth my hand to draw him nearer to my face in order to examine him closely. No sooner had I made the gesture than he opened his golden eyes and receded into the rear of the hole. But just the same I caught and took him up on the roof, and in the burning sunlight of May I scrutinized his eyelids. Yes, there it was: he had, attached to his eyelid, another thin lid

delicate as tissue paper, and every time I put his face toward the sun he drew that film over the two orbits of gold. And so I learned that it was a protective film for the eye which enabled the bird to fly in a dust storm or straight toward the sun.

In another fortnight Gay-Neck was taught how to fly. It was not at all easy, bird though he was by birth. A human child may love the water, yet he has to make mistakes and swallow water while learning the art of swimming. Similarly with my pigeon. He had a mild distrust of opening his wings, and for hours he sat on our roof, where the winds of the sky blew without quickening him to flight. In order to make the situation clear, let me describe our roof to you. It was railed with a solid concrete wall as high as a boy of fourteen. That prevented even a sleep-walker from slipping off the height of four storeys on the summer nights, when most of us slept on the roof.

Gay-Neck I put on that concrete wall every day. There he sat for hours at a time facing the wind, but that was all. One day I put some peanuts on the roof and called him to hop down and get them. He looked at me with an inquiring eye for a few moments. Turning from me he looked down again at the peanuts. He repeated this process several times. When at last he was convinced that I was not going to bring these delicious morsels up for him to eat, he began to walk up and down the railing, craning his neck occasionally towards the peanuts about three feet below. At last after fifteen minutes of heart-breaking hesitancy he hopped down. Just as his feet struck the floor his wings, hitherto unopened, suddenly spread themselves out full sail as he balanced himself over the nuts. What a triumph!

About this time I noticed the change of colours on his feathers. Instead of a nondescript gray-blue, a glossy aquamarine glowed all over him. And suddenly one morning in the sunlight his throat glistened like iridescent beads.

Now came the supreme question of flight. I waited for his parents to teach him the first lessons, though I helped the only way I could. Every day for a few minutes I made him perch on my wrist, then I would swing my arm up and down many times, and in order to balance himself on such a difficult perch he had to shut and open his wings frequently. That was good for him, but there ended my part of the teaching. You may ask me the reason of my hurrying matters so. He was already behind in his flying lessons, and in June, the rains begin to fall in India; and with the approach of the rainy season any long flight becomes impossible. I wished to train him in learning his directions as soon as I could.

However, one day long before the end of May, his father undertook the task. This particular day a brisk north wind, that had been sweeping about and cooling the atmosphere of the city, had just died down. The sky was clear as a limpid sapphire. The spaces were so clear that you could see the house-tops of our town, then the fields and arbours of the country in the farthest distance. About three o'clock in the afternoon Gay-Neck was sunning himself on the concrete wall of the roof. His father, who had been flying about in the air, came down and perched next to him. He looked at his son with a queer glance, as much as to say: 'Here, lazy-bones, you are nearly three months old, yet you do not dare to fly. Are you a pigeon or an earthworm?' But

Gay-Neck, the soul of dignity, made no answer. That exasperated his father who began to coo and boom at him in pigeon language. In order to get away from that volubility Gay-Neck moved, but his father followed cooing, booming and banging his wings. Gay-Neck went on removing himself farther and farther, and the old fellow, instead of relenting, redoubled his talk and pursued. At last the father pushed him so close to the edge that Gay-Neck had only one alternative, that is, to slip off the roof. Suddenly his father thrust upon his young body all the weight of his old frame. Gay-Neck slipped. Hardly had he fallen half a foot when he opened his wings and flew. Oh, what an exhilarating moment for all concerned! His mother, who was downstairs dipping herself in the water and performing her afternoon toilet, came up through the staircase and flew to keep her son company. They circled above the roof for at least ten minutes before they came down to perch. When they reached the roof the mother folded her wings as a matter of course and sat still. Not so the son: he was in a panic, like a boy walking into cold and deep water. His whole body shook, and his feet trod the roof gingerly as he alighted, skating over it furiously and flapping his wings in order to balance himself. At last he stopped, as his chest struck the side of the wall, and he folded his wings as swiftly as we shut a fan. Gay-Neck was panting with excitement, while his mother rubbed him and placed her chest against him as if he were a mere baby who badly needed brooding. Seeing that his task had been done successfully, Gay-Neck's father went down to take his bath.

From Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon.

L. A. G. STRONG

THE SEAL

ROSAMOND went very slowly down to the sea's edge, scooped a dry place—it was surprising, even after a day's rain, how soon one reached dry sand—and sat down, spreading her mackintosh about her like a tent. The rain was quickening: it began to patter audibly on the mackintosh, to collect in little gleaming rivulets and run down jerkily into the sand. All was still and intimate. She looked slowly around, and then again at the rivulets. While an hour like this was possible, she could be happy.

Some instinct made her look at the sea. At first there was nothing, and then a dark object broke the surface. It looked like the float for a lobster-pot: then it moved, and she saw that it was a seal. It was looking at her. She did not stir.

For a moment the head moved indecisively. Doubtless the seal could not make her out. Then, with a snort which carried perfectly on the still water, it dived again.

'Oh,' breathed Rosamond, heart-broken, 'don't go away,' and it seemed that her own country was rejecting her if the seal could not trust her not to wish him harm. She scanned the surface in an agony, and saw at last an unmistakable dark shadow, clear over the white sand: and there he was again, with a sort of oiled suddenness, away to the right, but definitely nearer, staring at her. Without moving, Rosamond began to whistle, in low, clear, liquid notes, like the rain. The dark head became absolutely motionless. He was listening. Then she

put into the notes her soul, her happy summers, all her childhood, flowing out across the water to him in one of the island tunes she had loved ever since she could tell one note from another. She whistled to her past years, to all that had meant happiness; she called to her own country to recognize her, and take her back to it again. Her soul and breath were one, and even in the uttermost of her appeal she had a sense of ecstasy, as of an artist consummating his vision alone, with none to praise him.

Then, slowly and softly, the big seal swam towards her, his dark head sleek on the water, his wondering eyes fixed upon her. Tears started to Rosamond's eyes.

'Oh, bless you,' she breathed, 'bless you, you darling.'

When he was quite near, she began to sing to him, in a low voice, clear as her whistle, but not so steady. She sang him the 'Seal Croon,' and the 'Seagull of the Land Under Waves,' and all the time the great nursery creature stared at her with soft eyes, in attention and vague delight. When she stopped, he blew, and made a commotion in the water, till she began again. It should have lasted for ever.

He stirred. Something had alarmed him; and, even as she realized this, she heard a hearty voice behind her, and George came charging headlong over the sandhills, bringing down avalanches with each leap.

'Dr-ink to me o-o-nly—'

The seal gave him a long look, then it looked back at Rosamond, and without a reproach it was gone, silently, a black shadow, detached from land and sea.

From *The English Captain*.

BY LAND AND SEA

JOHN MASEFIELD

THE 'BROKEN HEART'

THE short summer night was over; the stars were paling; there was a faint light above the hills. The flame in the ship's lantern felt the day beginning. A cock in the hen-coop crowed, flapping his wings. The hour was full of mystery. Though it was still, it was full of the suggestion of noise. There was a rustle, a murmur, a sense of preparation. Already, in the farms ashore, the pails went clanking to the byres. Very faintly, from time to time, one heard the lowing of a cow, or the song of some fisherman, as he put out, in the twilight, to his lobster-pots, sculling with one oar.

Dew had fallen during the night. The decks of the *Broken Heart*, lying at anchor there, with the lantern burning at her peak, were wet with dew. Dew dripped from her running rigging; the gleam of wetness was upon her guns, upon her rails, upon the bell in the poop belfry. She seemed august, lying there in the twilight. Her sailors, asleep on her deck, in the shadow, below the break of the quarter-deck, were unlike earthly sleepers. The old boatswain, in the blue boat-cloak, standing at the gangway watching the dawn, was august, sphinx-like, symbolic. The two men who stood above him on the quarter-deck spoke quietly, in hushed voices,

as though the hour awed them. Even the boy by the lantern, far aft, stood silently, moved by the beauty of the time. Over the water, by Salcombe, the fishers' boats got under way for the sea. The noise of the halliards creaked, voices called in the dusk, blocks piped, coils of rope rattled on the planks. The flower of the day was slowly opening in the east, the rose of the day was bursting. It was the dim time, the holy time, the moment of beauty, which would soon pass, was even now passing, as the sea gleamed, brightening, lighting up into colour.

Slowly the light grew: it came in rosy colour upon the ship: it burned like a flame upon the spire-top. The fishers in their boats, moving over the talking water, watched the fabric as they passed. She loomed large in the growing light; she caught the light and gleamed; the tide went by her with a gurgle. The dim light made her larger than she was, it gave her the beauty of all half-seen things. The dim light was like the veil upon a woman's face. She was a small ship (only five hundred tons), built of aromatic cedar, and like all wooden ships she would have looked ungainly, had not her great beam, and the height of her after-works, given her a majesty, something of the royal look which all ships have in some proportion. The virtue of man had been busy about her. An artist's heart, hungry for beauty, had seen the idea of her in dream; she had her counterpart in the kingdom of vision. There was a spirit in her, as there is in all things fashioned by the soul of man; not a spirit of beauty, not a spirit of strength, but the spirit of her builder, a Peruvian Spaniard. She had the impress of her builder in her, a mournful state, a kind of battered grandeur, a likeness to a type of man-

hood. There was in her a beauty not quite achieved, as though, in the husk of the man, the butterfly's wings were not quite free. There was in her a strength that was clumsy; almost the strength of one vehement from fear. She came from a man's soul, stamped with his defects. Standing on her deck, one could see the man laid bare—melancholy, noble, and wanting—till one felt pity for the ship which carried his image about the world. Seamen had lived in her, seamen had died in her; she had housed many wandering spirits. She was, in herself, the house of her maker's spirit, as all made things are, and wherever her sad beauty voyaged, his image, his living memory voyaged, infinitely mournful, because imperfect, unapprehended. Some of those who had sailed in her had noticed that the caryatides of the rails, the caryatides of the quarter-gallery, and the figurehead which watched over the sea, were all carven portraits of the one woman. But of those who noticed, none knew that they touched the bloody heart of a man, that before them was the builder's secret, the key to his soul. The men who sailed in the *Broken Heart* were not given to thoughts about her builder. When they lay in port, among all the ships of the world, among the flags and clamour, they took no thought of beauty. They would have laughed had a man told them that all that array of ships, so proud, so beautiful, came from the brain of man because a woman's lips were red. It is a proud thing to be a man, and to feel the stir of beauty; but it is more wonderful to be a woman, and to have, or to be, the touch calling beauty into life.

She had been a week in coming from the Pool¹ to

¹ The part of the Thames which lies between London Bridge and Limehouse.

the Start.¹ In the week her crew had settled down from their last drunkenness. The smuts had been washed from the fife-rails; the ropes upon the pins had lost the London grime from the lay of the strands. Now, as the sun rose behind the combes, flooding the land with light, smiting the water with gold, the boy, standing far aft, ran up her colours, and the boatswain, in his blue boat-cloak, bending forward slightly, blowing his smouldering match, fired the sunrise gun, raising his linstock in salute. The sleepers stirred among their blankets; one or two, fully wakened, raised themselves upon their elbows. A block creaked as the peak lantern was hauled down. Then with a shrill wail the pipe sounded the long double call, slowly heightening to piercing sharpness, which bids all hands arise.

From Captain Margaret.

JOSEPH CONRAD

THE OLD 'JUDEA'

'WE had fair breezes, smooth water right into the tropics, and the old *Judea* lumbered along in the sunshine. When she went eight knots everything cracked aloft, and we tied our caps to our heads; but mostly she strolled on at the rate of three miles an hour. What could you expect? She was tired—that old ship. Her youth was where mine is—where yours is—you fellows who listen to this yarn; and what friend would throw your years and your weariness in your face? We didn't grumble at her. To us aft, at least, it seemed as though we had been born in her, reared in her, had lived in her for ages,

¹ Start Point on the South Coast of Devon.

had never known any other ship. I would just as soon have abused the old village church at home for not being a cathedral.

'And for me there was also my youth to make me patient. There was all the East before me, and all life, and the thought that I had been tried in that ship and had come out pretty well. And I thought of men of old who, centuries ago, went that road in ships that sailed no better, to the land of palms, and spices, and yellow sands, and of brown nations ruled by kings more cruel than Nero the Roman and more splendid than Solomon the Jew. The old bark lumbered on, heavy with her age and the burden of her cargo, while I lived the life of youth in ignorance and hope. She lumbered on through an interminable procession of days; and the fresh gilding flashed back at the setting sun, seemed to cry out over the darkening seas the words painted on her stern, "*Judea*, London. Do or Die."

'Then we entered the Indian Ocean and steered northerly for Java Head. The winds were light. Weeks slipped by. She crawled on, do or die, and people at home began to think of posting us as overdue.

'One Saturday evening, I being off duty, the men asked me to give them an extra bucket of water or so—for washing clothes. As I did not wish to screw on the fresh-water pump so late, I went forward whistling, and with a key in my hand to unlock the forepeak scuttle, intending to serve the water out of a spare tank we kept there.

'The smell down below was as unexpected as it was frightful. One would have thought hundreds of paraffin-lamps had been flaring and smoking in that hole for days. I was glad to get out. The man with me

coughed and said, "Funny smell, sir." I answered negligently, "It's good for the health they say," and walked aft.

'The first thing I did was to put my head down the square of the midship ventilator. As I lifted the lid a visible breath, something like a thin fog, a puff of faint haze, rose from the opening. The ascending air was hot, and had a heavy, sooty, paraffiny smell. I gave one sniff and put down the lid gently. It was no use choking myself. The cargo was on fire.'

From *Youth*.

H. M. TOMLINSON

LAND BIRDS AT SEA

WE are nearing the Laccadives.¹ A dragon-fly passed over the ship on the wind. The wind is south-west, and the nearest land in that direction is Africa, over one thousand miles away. Some day a sailor who has a taste for natural history will give us the records of his voyages, and his notes may surprise the ornithologists, at least. Our men caught a merlin in the Red Sea, which was quite friendly, and took its own time to depart when it was released. Another day, while in the same waters, I was looking at a group of Chinese firemen sprawled on the after-hatch, and was wondering where in England a chance group of workers could be found to match those models, when a ray of coloured light flashed over them and focused on a davit. It was an unfamiliar bird, and I began to stalk it with binoculars while it changed its perches about the poop,

¹ Islands in the Arabian Sea.

till it was made out to be a bee-eater. Then I found the chief mate was behind me, intent also with his binoculars. We had some bickering about it. He said the bird was a roller; but I told him he should stick to his chipping hammer and leave the birds to better men. He said he would soon show me who was the better man, and escorted me the length of the ship to his cabin, where he produced a bird book, which was a log of several long voyages to the Far East. Like so many sailors to-day, he is versed in several matters which we landmen think are certainly not the business of sailors at all. He has been keeping a log of the land-birds which he has recognized at sea, and his record suggested what an excellent book a sailor who is also a naturalist may write for us some day.

This sailor had observed for himself, what naturalists know well enough, that the gulls are not sea-birds at all in the sense that are albatrosses and petrels, and the frigate and bo'sun birds of the tropics. When you see gulls, then land is near, though dirty weather may hide it. The herring gulls, kittiwakes, and black-backs never follow a ship to blue water. When, outward bound, land dissolves astern, then they too leave you. You may meet their fellows again off Ushant or Finis-terre if your ship passes not too far from the land; but should you be well to the westward, then the ship's next visitors will be land-birds when approaching Gibraltar.

Several pairs of noddies kept about the ship at the lower end of the Red Sea, and not because of anything we could give them except our society. They did not beg astern, like hungry gulls, for scraps, but wheeled about the bows, or manœuvred close abeam like swallows at play. As a fact, I think they were tired and wanted

to rest. Once or twice they alighted on our bulwarks and went through some astonishing aerial acrobatics while their tiny webbed feet sought the awkward perch.

After sundown one actually tried to alight on my head, while I stood in the dusk on the captain's bridge watching its evolutions. It swerved and stooped so unexpectedly that I ducked, as one used to at the sound of a shell going over. But soon it alighted behind me, and it made no more fuss about being picked up than though it were a rag. It was only a little sick, but got over that, and settled down on the palm of my hand. A group of shipmates were overworking a gramophone below on a hatch, where lamps made the deck bright. Down went the noddy and I to them. Our visitor cocked an eye at the gramophone and took quiet stock of the men who came round to stroke it. It accepted us all as quietly as though it had known us for years and this was the usual routine. It heard its mate later, or else our musical records were not to its taste, for it shook itself disconsolately, waddled a little, and projected itself into the night.

Last night the surgeon brought to my cabin another visitor. It was a petrel, about the size of a blackbird, and of a uniform dark chocolate colour. We judged it was uncommon, and there was a brief hint of chloroform, which was immediately dismissed, for our captain might have objected to any modern version of the Ancient Mariner's crime on his ship, even in the name of science. We enjoyed our guest in life till it was pleased to leave us.

From *Tidemarks*. .

ROBERT FALCON SCOTT

FORESTALLED

IT is wonderful to think that two long marches would land us at the Pole. We left our *dépôt* to-day with nine days' provisions, so that it ought to be a certain thing now, and the only appalling possibility the sight of the Norwegian flag forestalling ours. Little Bowers continues his indefatigable efforts to get good sights, and it is wonderful how he works them up in his sleeping-bag in our congested tent. Only 27 miles from the Pole. We *ought* to do it now.

Tuesday, January 16.—Camp 68. Height 9760. T.—23.5°. The worst has happened, or nearly the worst. We marched well in the morning and covered 7½ miles. Noon sight showed us in Lat. 89° 42' S., and we started off in high spirits in the afternoon, feeling that to-morrow would see us at our destination. About the second hour of the march Bowers' sharp eyes detected what he thought was a cairn; he was uneasy about it, but argued that it might be a *sastrugus*.¹ Half an hour later he detected a black speck ahead. Soon we knew that this could not be a natural snow feature. We marched on, found that it was a black flag tied to a sledge bearer; near by the remains of a camp; sledge tracks and ski tracks going and coming and the clear trace of dogs' paws—many dogs. This told us the whole story. The Norwegians have forestalled us and are first at the Pole. It is a terrible disappointment, and I am very sorry for my loyal companions. Many thoughts come and much discussion have we had. To-morrow we must march

¹ An irregularity formed by the wind on a snow plain.

on to the Pole and then hasten home with all the speed we can compass. All the day-dreams must go; it will be a wearisome return. We are descending in altitude—certainly also the Norwegians found an easy way up.

Wednesday, January 17. Camp 69. T.—22° at start. Night—21°. The Pole. Yes, but under very different circumstances from those expected. We have had a horrible day—add to our disappointment a head wind 4 to 5, with a temperature—22°, and companions labouring on with cold feet and hands.

We started at 7.30, none of us having slept much after the shock of our discovery. We followed the Norwegian sledge tracks for some way; as far as we make out there are only two men. In about three miles we passed two small cairns. Then the weather overcast, and the tracks being increasingly drifted up and obviously going too far to the west, we decided to make straight for the Pole according to our calculations. At 12.30 Evans had such cold hands we camped for lunch—an excellent 'week-end one.' We had marched 7.4 miles. Lat. sight gave 89°53'37". We started out and did 6½ miles due south. To-night little Bowers is laying himself out to get sights in terrible difficult circumstances; the wind is blowing hard, T.—21°, and there is that curious damp, cold feeling in the air which chills one to the bone in no time. We have been descending again, I think, but there looks to be a rise ahead; otherwise there is very little that is different from the awful monotony of past days. Great God! this is an awful place and terrible enough for us to have laboured to it without the reward of priority. Well, it is something to have got there, and the wind may be our friend to-morrow.

We have had a fat Polar hoosh¹ in spite of our chagrin, and feel comfortable inside—added a small stick of chocolate and the queer taste of a cigarette brought by Wilson. Now for the run home and a desperate struggle. I wonder if we can do it.

From *Scott's Last Expedition*.

GERTRUDE BELL

ACROSS THE SYRIAN DESERT

THE morning came grey and cheerless with an occasional scud of rain. We set off about six and took the familiar path across barren watercourses to Ain Zaza. The rain fell upon us and made heavy and sticky going, but it cleared before we reached the Ain and we lunched there and waited for the baggage camels till eleven. Kubeisa was only an hour and a half away, and it being so early I determined to refuse all the Sheikh's pressing invitations that we should spend the night with him, and push on to Hit, three and a half hours further. The baggage camels were informed of the change of plan and Fattuh and I rode on in high spirits at the thought of rejoining our caravan that evening. For you remember the caravan which we despatched from Damascus was to wait for us at Hit. But before we reached Kubeisa the rain came down again in torrents. Now the ground here is what the Arabs called 'sabkha,' soft, crumbly salt marsh, sandy when it is dry, and ready at a moment's notice to turn into a world of glutinous paste. This is what it did, and since camels cannot walk in mud, I was presently aware of a stupendous downfall and found myself and my

¹ Thick soup made from pemmican.

camel prostrate in the sticky glue. It feels like the end of the universe when your camel falls down. However we both rolled up unhurt and made the best of our way to the gates of Kubeisa. And here another misfortune awaited us. The rain was still falling heavy, Abdullah, Father of Camels, declared that his beasts could not go on to Hit across a road all sabkha, and even Fattuh admitted that, tired and hungry as they were, it would be impossible. So in great triumph and with much praising of God, the Sheikh conducted us to his house, where I was seized by a pack of beautiful and very inquisitive women ('They are shameless!' said Fattuh indignantly) and conducted into the pitch-dark room on the ground floor which is the living room. But the Sheikh rescued me and took me upstairs to the reception room on the roof. Everyone we met fell on his neck and greeted him with a kiss on either cheek, and no sooner were we seated upstairs and a bonfire of trees lighted in the middle of the room, than all the worthies of Kubeisa began to assemble to greet him and hear the news. At the end they numbered at least fifty. Now this was the room in which I was supposed to eat and sleep—there was no other. I took Fattuh aside—or rather outside, for the room was packed to overflowing—and said, 'The night will be troublesome.' Fattuh knitted his brows and without a word strode down the stairs. I returned to the company, and when the room grew too smoky with trees and tobacco sat outside talking to the Sheikh's charming son, Namân. The rain had stopped. My old acquaintances in Kubeisa had all been up to salute me, and I sat by the fire and listened to the talk and prayed that Fattuh might find some means of escape. He was as resourceful as usual.

After a couple of hours he returned and said, 'With your permission, O Muhammad. We are ready.' He had found a couple of camels and a donkey and we were off. So we took a most affectionate leave of the Sheik and left him to his narghileh.¹ Half the town of Kubeisa, the female half, followed us through the streets, and we turned our faces to Hit. The two camels carried our diminished loads. Fattuh rode the donkey (it was so small that his feet touched the ground and he presently abandoned it in favour of one of the baggage camels and sent it back) and I was supposed to ride my mare. But she had a sore heel, poor little thing, and kept stumbling in the mud, so I walked most of the way. We left at 2.30 and had two and a half hours before sunset. The first part of our way was hard and dry; presently we saw the smoke of the Hit pitch fires upon the horizon, and when we had passed between some low hills, there was the great mound of Hit and its single minaret in front of us. There remained an hour and a half of journey, the sun had set and our road was all sabkha. The camels slipped and slithered and tumbled down: 'Their legs are like soap,' explained the camel boy. If the rain had fallen again we should have been done. But it kept off till just as we reached Hit. The mound still loomed through the night and we could just see enough to keep more or less to our road—less rather than more—but not enough to make out whether stone or mud or sulphur pools lay in front of us. So we three great travellers, Fattuh, the mare and I, came into Hit, wet and weary, trudging through the dark, and looking, I make no doubt, like so many vagabonds, and thus ingloriously ended our fine adventure. The khan

¹ Pipe.

stands outside the town; the khanji is an old friend. 'Ya Abud !' shouted Fattuh, 'the caravan, our caravan, is it here?' 'Kinship and welcome, and may the earth be wide to you! They are here!' The muleteers hurried out, seized my bridle, seized my hand in theirs and laid it upon their forehead. All was safe and well, we and they and the animals and the packs. Praise God! there is no other but He. The khanji brought me tea, and various friends came to call. I dined and washed and went to bed.

And so you see, we have crossed the Syrian desert as easily as if it had been the Sultan's high road, and we have made many friends and seen the ruins we went out to see, and over and above all I have conceived quite a new theory about the mediæval roads through the desert which I will prove some day by another journey. And all that remains is the hope that this letter, which is the true history of all, will not be lost in the post.

From *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*.

T. E. LAWRENCE

THE VERITABLE DESERT

IN the morning Auda ¹ had us afoot before four, going up-hill, till at last we climbed a ridge to a plain, with an illimitable view down hill to the east, where one gentle level after another slowly modulated into a distance only to be called distance because it was a sober blue, and more hazy. The rising sun flooded this falling plain with a perfect level of light, throwing up long shadows of almost imperceptible ridges, and the whole life and play of a

¹ Sheikh Auda abu Tayi.

complicated ground-system—but a transient one; for, as we looked at it, the shadows drew in towards the dawn, quivered a last moment behind their mother-banks, and went out as though at a common signal. Full morning had begun: the river of sunlight, sickeningly in the full-face of us moving creatures, poured impartially on every stone of the desert.

The Fejr Bedouin, whose property it was, called our plain El Houl because it was desolate; and to-day we rode without seeing signs of life; no tracks of gazelle, no lizards, no burrowing of rats, not even any birds. We, ourselves, felt tiny in it, and our urgent progress across its immensity was a stillness or immobility of futile effort. The only sounds were the hollow echoes, like the shutting down of pavements over vaulted places, of rotten stone slab on stone slab when they tilted under our camels' feet; and the low but piercing rustle of the sand, as it crept slowly westward before the hot wind along the worn sandstone, under the harder overhanging cape which gave each reef its eroded, rind-like shape.

It was a breathless wind, with the furnace taste sometimes known in Egypt when a khamsin ¹ came, and, as the day went on and the sun rose in the sky it grew stronger, more filled with the dust of the Nefudh, the great sand desert of Northern Arabia, close by us over there, but invisible through the haze. By noon it blew a half-gale, so dry that our shrivelled lips cracked open, and the skin of our faces chapped; while our eyelids, gone granular, seemed to creep back and bare our shrinking eyes. The Arabs drew their headcloths tightly across their noses, and pulled the brow-folds forward like vizors with only a narrow, loose-flapping slit of vision.

¹ A hot wind which fills the air with desert sand.

We plodded on all day (even without the wind forbidding us there could have been no more luxury-halts under the shadow of blankets, if we would arrive unbroken men with strong camels at el Fejr), and nothing made us widen an eye or think a thought till evening, calm and black and full of stars, had come down on us. We had covered about fifty miles, so we halted.

Before dawn the following day we started, and at the height of noon reached the well of our desire. It was about thirty feet deep, stone-steined, seemingly ancient. The water was slightly brackish, but not ill-tasting when drunk fresh; though it soon grew foul in a skin. The valley had flooded in some burst of rain the year before, and therefore contained much dry and thirsty pasturage: to this we loosed our camels, to crop industriously till nightfall, then we watered them again, and pounded them under the bank a half-mile from the water, for the night: thus leaving the well unmolested in case raiders should need it in the dark hours. Yet our sentries heard no one.

As usual we were off before dawn and reached our stage, Khabr Ajaj, just before sunset, after a dull ride over a duller plain. The pool was of this year's rain, good for camels and just possible for men to drink. We had thought to find Howeitat¹ here; but the ground was grazed bare and the water fouled by their animals, while they themselves were gone. Auda searched for their tracks, but could find none: the wind-storms had swept the sand face into clean, new ripples. However, if we went away northward, we should find them.

The following day, despite the interminable lapse of time, was only our fourteenth from Wejh; and its sun

¹ A coastal tribe

rose upon us again marching, over flats of limestone and sand, towards a distant corner of the Great Nefudh, the famous belts of sand-dune which cut off Jebel Shammar from the Syrian Desert. Palgrave,¹ the Blunts² and Gertrude Bell³ amongst the storied travellers had crossed it, and I begged Auda to bear off a little and let us enter it, and their company: but he growled that men went to the Nefudh only of necessity, when raiding, and that the son of his father did not raid on a tottering, mangy camel. Our business was to reach Arfaja alive.

From *Revolt in the Desert*.

J. A. SPENDER

TUTANKHAMEN AND HIS TREASURE

WHEN I was in Cairo in January of this year, clouds of tourists were descending on the country. They were coming in ship-loads, four or five hundred at a time, crowding out the hotels, thronging the bazaars, buying indiscriminately, and making Paradise for the dragomen. Americans were, of course, the great majority, but English, Germans, Italians, French and Scandinavians were also of the company. This, I was told, was only a beginning. In the following year double the number were expected, and already most of the berths in world-touring steamers, and a large number of the rooms in the hotels, were booked for 1927. One optimist predicted that within seven years there would be daily services of

¹ William G. Palgrave (1826-1888).

² Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1840-1922), who travelled with his wife in Arabia between 1877 and 1881.

³ See page 194.

airships and aeroplanes which would bring week-end tourists by the thousand from all the capitals of Europe.

Tutankhamen¹ has done it or a large part of it. The enormous advertisement which Egypt has had through and since the opening of the famous tomb in the Valley of the Kings has set all the world talking about her. There are great and beautiful things all over the world which intelligent people would equally wish to see, but for ordinary folk the Tutankhamen remains have a lure which few or none of the others possess. They are not battered relics of antiquity, but things new and bright coming straight from the three thousand-year-old tomb, as if they had been deposited there yesterday. This, from an artistic point of view, ought, I suppose, to be counted a fictitious advantage appealing only to vulgar minds. Yet I defy anyone of ordinary susceptibilities not to feel a certain awe and wonder as he looks at the belongings, precisely as they saw and handled them, of men and women who lived before Moses and Agamemnon, and when Greece and Rome and the Christian era were undreamt of. It is only Egypt that can show these things, and, through the interest which has been aroused in them, it is gradually being brought home to the rest of the world that the whole country is an incomparable museum of human origins in which all civilized peoples have an interest.

The glories of Tutankhamen have certainly not been exaggerated. After seeing them I am even tempted to say that the half has not been told. No verbal descriptions or photographs can do justice to the miracles of art and craft that are now on view in the Cairo museum.

¹ In 1923-4 Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Howard Carter, excavating in the Valley of the Kings, discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen.

Whether for broad effects covering large spaces, or for minute intricacies of the jeweller's and enameller's art requiring a magnifying glass to reveal their beauties, these objects are unsurpassable. The great gold coffin and 'mask' of Tutankhamen, which were brought down to Cairo at the beginning of January, are the climax of the collection, and literally they leave one breathless. The modelling of the coffin, showing faintly the outline of the figure, is fascinating to the eye, and the engraved work on it a miracle of beauty. The two figures with outstretched arms and wings which form a frame to the central inscription are a triumph of solemn design in perfect harmony with the simple and serene lines of the face at the head of the coffin. And now if one turns to the 'mask,' which is in fact a life-size bust in beaten gold with lines of blue enamel on the eyebrows and the head-dress, one sees the boy king in life and with the same compelling charm that arrests one in all his portraits. This bust will probably rank as the supreme masterpiece of the period. The thing aimed at is perfectly accomplished; the mastery of the difficult material is complete; there is a real emotion gravely restrained which subdues its glitter and colour and somehow communicates an infinite regret. Under it might have been written: *Si qua fata aspera rumpas, tu Marcellus eris.*¹

The anthropological interest is enormous. The collection of walking-sticks with the figures of captives on their handles is in itself a whole portrait gallery of contemporary types wrought with such exquisite skill and realism that you seem to see the actual living men before you. One, probably an Assyrian, looks like an

¹ A quotation from Vergil's *Æneid*. 'Couldst thou but break the bars of stubborn fate, thou shalt be our Marcellus.'

evangelical clergyman of the nineteenth century and he is ignominiously tied up with a Nubian negro, as if to give a hint of the reverse side of the culture of ancient Egypt. Seeing all these objects together sets one speculating on the culture and the general mode of life that they imply. It is certain that these beautiful thrones, chairs, beds, chariots, alabaster vases, linen chests, statuettes and other artistic treasures were in surroundings to match, and one sees in imagination the sumptuous palace from which they were taken.

But the Tutankhamen objects, though the latest and the best advertised, are only a small part of the treasures of Egypt. The Cairo museum is overflowing with beautiful and wonderful things to be seen nowhere else in the world; the country is sown with tombs and temples and half-explored sites, any one of which may produce wonders equal to those of the Tutankhamen tomb. Under the new impulse given to Egyptology, all the principal universities in the world and societies and schools of archæology are raising funds and seeking concessions to dig in Egypt. And presently, artists and art critics will come to Egypt, as they ought to have done long ago, and make a serious attempt to appraise her contribution to the art of the world. The idea that Egyptian art was a conventional thing of stale repetitions without interest to the historians of art could never have survived any serious examination of the low-relief sculpture of the tombs, but it becomes sheer nonsense in view of the proofs now coming to light of the great artistic period which followed the reforms of Akhnaten and lasted on into the period of reaction. Egypt is ripe for a Ruskin¹ to write about her 'Stones,' and in the next few years,

¹ John Ruskin (1819-1900), author of *The Stones of Venice*, etc.

unless I am much mistaken, a great many Ruskins of different nationalities will be in the field.

From *The Changing East*.

LAFCADIO HEARN

THE STRANGENESS AND CHARM OF JAPAN

MY own first impressions of Japan—Japan as seen in the white sunshine of a perfect spring day—had doubtless much in common with the average of such experiences. I remember especially the wonder and the delight of the vision. The wonder and the delight have never passed away: they are often revived for me even now, by some chance happening, after fourteen years of sojourn. But the reason of these feelings was difficult to learn—or at least to guess; for I cannot yet claim to know much about Japan. . . . Long ago the best and dearest Japanese friend I ever had said to me, a little before his death: ‘When you find, in four or five years more, that you cannot understand the Japanese at all, then you will begin to know something about them.’ After having realized the truth of my friend’s prediction—after having discovered that I cannot understand the Japanese at all—I feel better qualified to attempt this essay.

As first perceived, the outward strangeness of things in Japan produces (in certain minds, at least) a queer thrill impossible to describe—a feeling of weirdness which comes to us only with the perception of the totally unfamiliar. You find yourself moving through queer small streets full of odd small people, wearing robes and sandals of extraordinary shapes; and you can scarcely distinguish the

sexes at sight. The houses are constructed and furnished in ways alien to all your experience; and you are astonished to find that you cannot conceive the use or meaning of numberless things on display in the shops. Food-stuffs of unimaginable derivation; utensils of enigmatic forms; emblems incomprehensible of some mysterious belief; strange masks and toys that commemorate legends of gods or demons; odd figures, too, of the gods themselves, with monstrous ears and smiling faces—all these you may perceive as you wander about; though you must also notice telegraph-poles and type-writers, electric lamps and sewing-machines. Everywhere on signs and hangings, and on the backs of people passing by, you will observe wonderful Chinese characters; and the wizardry of all these texts makes the dominant tone of the spectacle.

Further acquaintance with this fantastic world will in nowise diminish the sense of strangeness evoked by the first vision of it. You will soon observe that even the physical actions of the people are unfamiliar—that their work is done in ways the opposite of Western ways. Tools are of surprising shapes, and are handled after surprising methods: the blacksmith squats at his anvil, wielding a hammer such as no Western smith could use without long practice; the carpenter pulls, instead of pushing his extraordinary plane and saw. Always the left is the right side, and the right side the wrong; and keys must be turned, to open or close a lock, in what we are accustomed to think the wrong direction. Mr. Percival Lowell has truthfully observed that the Japanese speak backwards, read backwards, write backwards—and that this is 'only the *abc* of their contrariety.' For the habit of writing backwards there are obvious evolutionary reasons; and the requirements of Japanese calligraphy

sufficiently explain why the artist pushes his brush or pencil instead of pulling it. But why, instead of putting the thread through the eye of the needle, should the Japanese maiden slip the eye of the needle over the point of the thread? Perhaps the most remarkable, out of a hundred possible examples of antipodal action, is furnished by the Japanese art of fencing. The swordsman, delivering his blow with both hands, does not pull the blade towards him in the moment of striking, but pushes it from him. He uses it, indeed, as other Asiatics do, not on the principle of the wedge, but of the saw; yet there is a pushing motion where we should expect a pulling motion in the stroke . . . These and other forms of unfamiliar action are strange enough to suggest the notion of a humanity even physically as little related to us as might be the population of another planet—the notion of some anatomical unlikeness. No such unlikeness, however, appears to exist; and all this oppositeness probably implies, not so much the outcome of a human experience entirely independent of Aryan experience, as the outcome of an experience evolutionally younger than our own.

Yet that experience has been one of no mean order. Its manifestations do not merely startle: they also delight. The delicate perfection of workmanship, the light strength and grace of objects, the power manifest to obtain the best results with the least material, the achieving of mechanical ends by the simplest possible means, the comprehension of irregularity as æsthetic value, the shapeliness and perfect taste of everything, the sense displayed of harmony in tints or colours—all this must convince you at once that our Occident has much to learn from this remote civilization, not only in matters of art and tastes, but in matters likewise of economy and utility. It

is no barbarian fancy that appeals to you in those amazing porcelains, those astonishing embroideries, those wonders of lacquer and ivory and bronze, which educate imagination in unfamiliar ways. No: these are the products of a civilization which became, within its own limits, so exquisite that none but an artist is capable of judging its manufactures—a civilization that can be termed imperfect only by those who would also term imperfect the Greek civilization of three thousand years ago.

From Japan.

REGINALD FARRER

A LIVING BUDDHA

AND now, to console me for the locked doors that everywhere defrauded my hopes, Mr. Christie suggested that I might like to have an audience of the Living Buddha of Nalang, the oldest and holiest and most important of the sacred personages at that time in the walls of Jo-ni Abbey. To this I eagerly assented, and we turned down a side street and stopped at the door of a neat new house to inquire of its keeper whether His Holiness would receive us. The door-keeper attendant was a magnificent sight of a man of the finest Tibetan type, huge in bone and stature, with the monumental head of some Roman Emperor, enlightened by friendly brown-velvet eyes and a glittering show of teeth perpetually displayed in smiles. Stately in his swathings of purple he stood before us, then turned to ascend the little wooden stair to inquire his master's will. A moment later he was beckoning us up, and we duly followed. We found ourselves in the neatest of pin-clean low ante-rooms, panelled in bright pitch-

pine, as it might have been any just-completed vestry. The room beyond was the sanctum, and of the same scale and decoration.

And here, on his dais beneath the latticed paper window, the Sacred Body of Nalang sat cross-legged in hieratic attitude, and his cross-shouldered robes of golden silk shimmered softly in the subdued sunlight of the room. Etiquette absolutely forbids a Living Buddha to arise from his seat, but the Holiness of Nalang received us with the utmost friendliness, and invited us up on to the dais to sit and have a talk, while he bade the attendant prepare us the inevitable drink of tea. The Sacred Body, it was evident, had for its tenant a wise and sound being; its face was marked with good breeding and alert interest, and its whole presence radiated rather learning and balance and kindness than that extraordinary emanation of impregnable felicity which one only meets with once or twice in one's life—if one has the high fortune to meet it at all—and which, wherever met, in whatever country, sex, or creed, is the unmistakable sign of that happiness incarnate which is the Buddhahood, the perfected wisdom that stands for ever beyond reach of sorrow or uncertainty.

The conversation proceeded freely, facilitated by the kindness of Mr. Christie. Indeed, the difficulty of the situation was only increased by his kindness, for, the more willingly did he lend himself to talking for me of Buddhist faith to the Buddha, the more scruple did I necessarily feel about presuming on a generosity so willing and so rare. However, views of the world and its prospects were freely exchanged, and His Holiness showed lively interest on hearing that I had visited the Eight Sacred Places of Ceylon and possessed leaves from the holy tree at Anuradhapura; for the days of those far pilgrimages

are past for the faithful of the northern school, Singhala the holy is no longer even a name to the brethren of the north, and no more do the Buddhas and searchers of China and Tibet follow the footsteps of Huen Tsang across the wilderness of Asia to the blessed spots of the south.

And then I asked him of his own life, and how it passed in the abbey. He gave me the tale of studies and services, and the correspondence that a Living Buddha has to entertain with the other churches and manifestations throughout Tibet. We talked of Labrang, and he told me that the dominant Buddha there was good, but in the hands of a Chapter full of wickedness, ambition, and rebellion (in fact, they say that the chief manifestation at Labrang is at present only a child). Then came tea in a superb squat old teapot of burnished copper, which spouted its contents through the mouth of a gaping dragon in brass; after which it grew time to be moving on our way, so as not too long to disturb His Holiness from the Scriptures that lay open before him on the little low table. The Living Buddha now reminded his acolyte in an aside, and suddenly was presenting me with that small, fringy, silken scarf which all over Tibet serves as a visiting-card, and is a mark of friendship signed and sealed between giver and receiver. This one was of white, but often they are of a very soft and lovely watery blue. By an irony of trade they are all made in South China, and in the exigencies of friendliness among the Tibetan abbeys one never can keep these scarves of blessing as one could wish, but they flow out right and left. This was my first experience of the genial pretty custom. Bowing, I received the offering, laid across my outstretched wrists, and deplored that, not forewarned, I had not armed my-

self with any return, such as etiquette ordinarily demands, to show that the alliance is equal on both sides. Then we got up to go, and lo! a miracle, unique in Mr. Christie's experience; as Mr. Christie's own broad-mindedness remains at present unique in mine. For suddenly the Living Buddha rose from his sacrosanct posture, and was actually escorting me to the door in an unheard-of superfluity of condescension, perhaps granted to me as one of his own faith, but anyhow arousing wonder in all who heard or saw. It was not till we reached the threshold of the outer room that at last I could prevail upon His Holiness to desist and return to his meditations on his throne.

From On the Eaves of the World.

OUR WORLD AND OTHERS

SIR ARTHUR KEITH

EARLY MAN

IN tracing the various kinds of men who lived in the Neolithic¹ period, the open country, the river valleys, and the submerged land surfaces served us very well. When, however, we try to follow man beyond the bounds of the Neolithic period—beyond the time at which the Thames was depositing the deepest layers of ballast gravel in her ancient bed—we must seek sequestered nooks where the earth keeps a more orderly register of events than in the turmoil of flooded valleys. The ideal place we seek is a cave, particularly a limestone cave, for the drip from the roof, laden with lime salts, seals up with a covering of stalagmite² any bones which chance to lie on the floor. The floor of such a cave is always having additions made to it. If men make their hearths on it, human débris accumulates. Chips and dust are always falling from the roof; the mud washed in by rain or flood is added to other accumulations. In course of time the floor may grow until it actually reaches the roof, thus obliterating the cave. If no living thing has visited the cave as it became filled up, then the strata of the floor are 'sterile'; but if men have used the cave as a habitation or as a passing shelter, or if they chance to die or are buried there, then

¹ The later Stone Age.

² An incrustation of lime.

the earth-buried stratum of that time becomes a page of history. It has taken us nearly a century to understand that caves may contain historical documents of the most precious kind. By a study of cave records, we have come by a knowledge of the races which preceded the men of the Neolithic period—the races of the Palæolithic¹ period.

We cannot begin a brief survey of how the very ancient world of Palæolithic man has been revealed to us more profitably than by taking our stand on the south coast of Wales, where we studied Neolithic man of the submerged-forest period. To the west of Aberavon and Swansea, the peninsula of Gower juts southwards, exposing its limestone cliffs, 100 feet high, on the shore of the Bristol Channel. The Paviland cave opens on the seaward face of the cliffs, 30 feet above the tide, but not beyond the reach of the waves in time of storm. In the latter part of the eighteenth century news of the discovery of extinct forms of animals—elephant, rhinoceros, bear, lion, and hyena—in the strata of caves in South Germany had spread abroad, and the antiquarians of South Wales were led to seek for and to find similar remains in the floor of the Paviland cave. This discovery brought Dean Buckland, then reader of Geology in the University of Oxford, hot-foot to South Wales in 1822. The Dean found abundance of the bones of these extinct animals in the strata of the floor; he also discovered the skeleton of a tall man, coloured red with ochre, buried side by side with the bones of extinct animals. Curiously shaped flint implements, with ornaments and implements worked in bone and in ivory, lay in the same stratum. The Dean was able to explain the occurrence of a human skeleton side by side with the bones of extinct animals¹ in

¹ The earliest Stone Age.

a manner satisfactory both to himself and the men of his time. The animals were pre-diluvian; they had been swept within the Paviland cave by the great Flood through which the ark rode in safety. The human remains were post-diluvian¹; they had been buried there by people who had settled in Britain after the universal Deluge. It was then an article of faith that man did not exist in Western Europe before the Flood.

About the same time a Roman Catholic priest, the Rev. J. MacEnery, stationed near Torquay, became interested in caves. In 1825, in one of the wooded dales lying behind the picturesque town of Torquay, on the south coast of Devonshire, Mr. MacEnery began to explore that great rambling subterranean series of chambers known as Kent's Cavern. In the dense layer of stalagmite covering the floor of the cave, he found implements in stone and in bone, shaped by the hand of man, mingled with the bones of the same extinct animals as Dean Buckland had found at Paviland. The priest had the courage to draw a just conclusion from these observations in Kent's Cavern, and to face the opposition of the Dean and of the opinion of his time. Mr. MacEnery was convinced that man had lived in England as a contemporary of the mammoth, the rhinoceros, the cave-bear, and all those animals which we now know were native to Europe before our present climatic conditions dawned with the advent of Neolithic man. Mr. MacEnery did not dare to even publish his records; they were discovered and published by the Torquay Natural History Society many years after his death. It was thus a priest, who first broke into the world of Palæolithic man—at least in England.

¹ After the Flood.

How slowly a belief in man's antiquity made headway will be realized if we follow Sir Charles Lyell in his journey abroad in 1833. He, the great geologist, was preparing a third edition of his *Principles*, and, as was his habit, visited every site in Europe where any discovery of note had been made. In 1833 his way lay through Belgium, and he stopped at Liège to see one of the Professors at the University—Dr. Schmerling. The banks of the Meuse, before this river reaches Liège, are flanked by steep limestone cliffs, often 200 feet in height. On their vertical face open many rambling caves. Dr. Schmerling had been caught in the vortex of cave exploration, and was able to place before the English geologist in 1833 the results gained by four years of severe toil in over forty caves. The collection represented those extinct forms of animals which Dean Buckland discovered in the Welsh cave, but Dr. Schmerling had found them in greater abundance and in greater variety. The same evidences of man's presence were found mingled with the fossil remains of animals—worked flint implements, weapons and ornaments in ivory and in bone. In one of the caves—that of Engis—Dr. Schmerling found a human skull, besides other fragments in the same cemented stratum of stalagmite as contained the fossil bones. 'The cranium,' says Dr. Schmerling, 'was met with at a depth of a metre and a half (nearly 5 feet), hidden under an osseous breccia, composed of the remains of small animals, and containing one rhinoceros tusk. . . . The earth which contained this human skull exhibited no trace of disturbance; teeth of rhinoceros, horse, hyena, bear, surrounded it on all sides.' Dr. Schmerling had thus advanced our knowledge of man's antiquity a point beyond that reached by the Rev. Mr. MacEnery at Kent's Cavern. Not

only had he found proof of man's existence with animals now extinct—animals which had disappeared from the face of Europe before the Neolithic age dawned—but he had actually discovered Palæolithic man himself. Sir Charles Lyell was a true scientist, with an open and just mind, but he turned away from Dr. Schmerling's discovery—still sceptical. Thirty years after the date just mentioned (1833), Sir Charles published a work which convinced thinking minds that man's antiquity was infinitely greater than usually believed. It took the scientific world thirty years to assimilate Schmerling's discovery. The discovery of the remains of a human being as the contemporary of extinct animals was more than even the open, well-balanced mind of Sir Charles Lyell could admit in 1833. Schmerling's work, like that of other pioneers, had to wait for a new generation.

From The Antiquity of Man.

SIR E. RAY LANKESTER

AND EARLIER BEASTS

THERE are a good many instances in which small living animals were represented in the past by gigantic forms very close in structure to the little living beasts, but of much greater size. Hence it is concluded that these particular living animals are the reduced and dwindled representatives of a race of primeval monsters. There is some truth in this, as you will see from the history of the living sloths and armadilloes of South America, as compared with the giant extinct sloths and armadilloes dug up in that country. The same relation is true as to the kangaroos and wombats now living in Australia

as compared with gigantic extinct creatures of the same kind which are dug up in Australia in sands and morasses of late geological date. But it is a great mistake to conclude from this that it is a law of Nature that recent animals are all small and insignificant as compared with their representatives in the past. That is simply not true. Recent horses are bigger than extinct ones, and much bigger than the three-toed and four-toed ancestors of horses. Recent elephants are as big as any that have existed, and much bigger than the earlier elephantine ancestors. There never has been any creature of any kind—mammal, reptile, bird, or fish—in any geological period we know of, so big as some of the existing whales, the Sperm Whale, the Great Rorqual, and the Whale-bone whales. It is true that there were enormous reptiles in the past, far larger than any living crocodiles, standing fourteen feet at the loins and measuring eighty feet from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail; but their bodies did not weigh much more than that of a big African elephant and were small compared with whales. So let us be under no illusions as to extinct monsters, and proceed to look at those of South America with simple courage and confidence in our own day.

South America was not so long ago a vast island and connected at an earlier period with Australia. Later it has joined on to North America. Its own peculiar productions in the way of animals appear to be the members of the group of mammals called Edentata—very peculiar forms, with strange teeth, and none at all in the front of the jaws. From North America, when it joined on there, it received the mastodons, horses, tigers, tapirs, and other kinds produced in the Holarctic area. This seems to have led to the dying out of the big kinds of Edentata,

and now there are only the small tree-sloths, the small armadilloes and the strange-looking ant-eaters. But in quite late geological deposits in South America we find the bones of gigantic armadilloes and of gigantic ground sloths, which lasted on till the time when man appeared on the scene, though now extinct. A great variety of large creatures of the kinds known as *Edentata* preceded these in earlier geological times in South America.

The Glyptodons, of which there are several different kinds, were enormous armadilloes, as big as an ox. Like the recent little armadilloes they carried a hard case formed by bones in the skin, but this was not jointed so that they could roll up into a ball, as can the living armadilloes.

The Megatherium was nearly as big as an elephant, and was very closely similar in its skeleton and teeth to the little living sloths of to-day. But it stood on the ground and pulled the trees down in order to eat the tender young branches instead of climbing up into the trees and living there as the present sloths do.

Not quite so big as the Megatherium was the Mylodon, which lived at the same time. The remains of both are found in the comparatively recent (Pleistocene) gravels of the Argentine Republic. The skeletons of these animals may be seen side by side in the Natural History Museum.

From Extinct Animals.

SIR ROBERT BALL

EXPLORERS OF THE SKY

IT will now be necessary to mention that the Solar System, as we understand it in these modern days of large telescopes, is a vastly more complex system of organized movements than was presented to Kepler¹ when his great labours were undertaken. In the first place, Saturn has been now, for more than one hundred years, deposed from the position it once occupied as the outermost of the known planets. Outside that globe revolves the great planet Uranus, which, at a mean distance of 1,777 millions of miles, nearly twenty times as great as that of the Earth, performs its mighty revolution in a period of eighty-four years. Though Uranus is so vast that its diameter is more than four times as great as that of the Earth, yet it is an object only to be discerned by the unaided eye under very favourable circumstances on an exceptionally clear and dark night. In fact, this planet so closely resembles a star that it was never distinguished by the acuteness of ancient astronomers from the tens of thousands of similar stellar points. It was reserved for William Herschel,² with his home-made reflecting telescope, to bring the planet Uranus to light by his superb discovery of this great globe in 1782.

For the lapse of another half-century it seemed as if Uranus was to be entitled to the position that had been so long accorded to Saturn of circumscribing the limits of our system. But in 1846 Uranus was itself superseded. The discovery of Neptune is a well-known

¹ Johann Kepler (1571-1630), German astronomer.

² Sir William Herschel (1738-1822).

chapter in astronomy; I have so fully described it elsewhere that I do not propose to enter into it here. Suffice it now to say that the planet Uranus indicated by its movements the existence of some great orb still more remote. The annals of astronomy present no more brilliant achievement than that by which Le Verrier¹ and Adams,² guided solely by such indications as the movements of Uranus afforded, were conducted to a knowledge of the precise spot in the heavens where a planet lay on which no human eye had ever gazed. The telescopic discovery of this planet, made solely in consequence of these theoretical indications, was the crowning point of the Newtonian doctrine of Universal Gravitation. Neptune is the name of the vast orb so revealed; it is entirely beyond the scope of the unaided eye. A telescope is required to show it, and then the planet appears like a star of about the eighth magnitude.

Before going further, it will be necessary to mention the principles by which a planet in actual observation is to be discriminated from a star. To the unaided eye there is no test that can be applied of a thoroughly reliable character, except that of the presence or absence of movement. Jupiter and Venus, no doubt, under certain circumstances shine more brightly than any ordinary star; but Saturn and Mars might easily be mistaken for stars—as indeed they often are. To some eyes, it is true, the difference in character between the light from a planet and the light from a star is more or less recognizable. No sound means of discrimination between the two, however, can be procured from this consideration. The only

¹ Urbain Jean Joseph Le Verrier (1811–1877), French astronomer.

² John Couch Adams (1819–1892), English astronomer.

reliable criterion available to the unaided eye is provided by the fact of the planet's movement. If the body believed to be a planet be aligned with the fixed stars in its vicinity, it becomes possible, in months or weeks, or sometimes even in days, to detect the movement if it exists, and thus to disclose the real character of the object. But to those who are observing with a telescope, the contrast between a star and one of the more important planets is immediately recognized. Whatever may be the power of the instrument, the star appears only like a point of light—a point of sun-like brilliance, it may be, but still devoid of appreciable form. Quite otherwise, however, is the telescopic appearance of one of the chief planets. The instrument displays at once to the observer a more or less globular body, whereof he is not only able to see the outline, but even, in many cases, to discriminate certain features or markings on the disc. In examining Venus, for instance, it is the beautiful crescent form of that body when seen as an evening star or a morning star which first rivets attention. The moon-like appearance of this globe is indeed one of the most striking features disclosed by the telescope in the Solar System. In a less conspicuous manner the planet Mercury also exhibits phases of a moon-like character. Mars presents to the observer a globe marked over with features so far capable of being distinguished that maps of his surface, and even globes representing it, have been constructed. Jupiter, the largest planet of all, shows belts and other markings on his surface indicative of the mighty system of clouds by which his great bulk is encompassed. Of all the planets, however, Saturn competes most successfully for the attention of the possessor of a good telescope. This famous planet exhibits a globe of such stately proportions

that it is more than seven hundred times as big as our Earth. No doubt certain features are to be remarked even on the ball of Saturn, but anything that can be thereon discerned is greatly inferior in interest to the phenomena which can be seen on the other great globe, Jupiter, which is at once larger than Saturn and much nearer to the terrestrial observer. But the feature which gives to Saturn a unique interest is the marvellous ring, or rather system of rings, by which its globe is surrounded.

Next outside Saturn we come to Uranus, but the interest of this object as a telescopic spectacle is very much less than are those presented by the other great planets we have mentioned. Notwithstanding the mighty globe which Uranus no doubt possesses, it presents but little that is noteworthy so far as its features are concerned. There is, indeed, a double reason for the apparent insignificance of Uranus. In the first place, the remoteness of this planet is such that from our point of view its mighty bulk seems reduced to very minute dimensions, though it is still sufficiently large to be discriminated from a star by the telescopic visibility of a disc. But that this disc is by no means obvious without a fairly good telescope will be evident from the circumstances which were brought to light after its discovery had been announced by Herschel. It then appeared that the planet had been looked at no fewer than seventeen times by even experienced astronomers before it came under Herschel's notice. No expectation of a visible disc on such a body had been present to their minds, and the actual disc which the body possessed was not broad enough to strike unexpectant observers. They merely regarded the planet as one of the countless host of stars, and recorded its position in the star-catalogues which it was the object of their

researches to produce. How little were these early astronomers conscious of the wonderful discovery which lay so nearly to their hand! It was in consequence of the exceptional acuteness of Herschel's powers of observation, that when this planet entered into the field of his telescope his scrutiny showed that it had a different aspect from that of a fixed star. The attention of the great astronomer was accordingly quickened, and he watched the mysterious body narrowly. Further observation disclosed that this object was in actual movement, this circumstance alone clearly discriminating it from an ordinary star. Ere long Herschel demonstrated that what he had found was indeed a majestic planet: the first of all the bodies so called which have been discovered within the memory of man.¹

From The Story of the Sun.

A. S. EDDINGTON

THE SECRETS OF MARS

MARS is the only planet whose solid surface can be seen and studied; and it tempts us to consider the possibility of life in more detail. Its smaller size leads to considerably different conditions; but the two essentials, air and water, are both present though scanty. The Martian atmosphere is thinner than our own but it is perhaps adequate. It has been proved to contain oxygen. There is no

¹ In March, 1930, the discovery of an eighth major planet was announced by the observatory at Flagstaff, Arizona, founded by Professor Lowell (see page 225). This planet is even more distant than Neptune, and, like other planets, had been observed before but mistaken for a fixed star. [*Editor.*]

ocean; the surface markings represent, not sea and land, but red desert and darker ground which is perhaps moist and fertile. A conspicuous feature is the white cap covering the pole which is clearly a deposit of snow; it must be quite shallow since it melts away completely in the summer. Photographs show from time to time indubitable clouds which blot out temporarily large areas of surface detail; clear weather, however, is more usual. The air, if cloudless, is slightly hazy. W. H. Wright¹ has shown this very convincingly by comparing photographs taken with light of different wave-lengths. Light of short wave-length is much scattered by haze and accordingly the ordinary photographs are disappointingly blurry. Much sharper surface-detail is shown when visual yellow light is employed (a yellow screen being commonly used to adapt visual telescopes for photography); being of longer wave-length the visual rays penetrate the haze more easily. Still clearer detail is obtained by photographing with the long infra-red waves.

Great attention has lately been paid to the determination of the temperature of the surface of Mars; it is possible to find this by direct measurement of the heat radiated to us from different parts of the surface. The results, though in many respects informative, are scarcely accurate and accordant enough to give a definite idea of the climatology. Naturally the temperature varies a great deal between day and night and in different latitudes; but on the average the conditions are decidedly chilly. Even at the equator the temperature falls below freezing point at sunset. If we accepted the present determinations as definite we should have some doubt as to whether life could endure the conditions.

¹ William Hammond Wright (1871), American astronomer.

In one of Huxley's¹ Essays there occurs the passage 'Until human life is longer and the duties of the present press less heavily I do not think that wise men will occupy themselves with Jovian or Martian natural history.' To-day it would seem that Martian natural history is not altogether beyond the limits of serious science. At least the surface of Mars shows a seasonal change such as we might well imagine the forest-clad earth would show to an outside onlooker. This seasonal change of appearance is very conspicuous to the attentive observer. As the spring in one hemisphere advances (I mean, of course, the Martian spring), the darker areas, which are at first few and faint, extend and deepen in contrast. The same regions darken year after year at nearly the same date in the Martian calendar. It may be that there is an inorganic explanation; the spring rains moisten the surface and change its colour. But it is perhaps unlikely that there is enough rain to bring about this change as a direct effect. It is easier to believe that we are witnessing the annual awakening of vegetation so familiar on our own planet.

The existence of oxygen in the Martian atmosphere supplies another argument in support of the existence of vegetable life. Oxygen combines freely with many elements, and the rocks in the earth's crust are thirsty for oxygen. They would in course of time bring about its complete disappearance from the air, were it not that the vegetation extracts it from the soil and sets it free again. If oxygen in the terrestrial atmosphere is maintained in this way, it would seem reasonable to assume that vegetable life is required to play the same part on Mars. Taking this in conjunction with the evidence of

¹ Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), scientist.

the seasonal changes of appearance, a rather strong case for the existence of vegetation seems to have been made out.

If vegetable life must be admitted, can we exclude animal life? I have come to the end of the astronomical data and can take no responsibility for anything further that you may infer. It is true that the late Professor Lowell¹ argued that certain more or less straight markings on the planet represent an artificial irrigation system and are the signs of an advanced civilization; but this theory has not, I think, won much support. In justice to the author of this speculation it should be said that his own work and that of his observatory have made a magnificent contribution to our knowledge of Mars; but few would follow him all the way on the more picturesque side of his conclusions. Finally we may stress one point. Mars has every appearance of being a planet long past its prime; and it is in any case improbable that two planets differing so much as Mars and the Earth would be in the zenith of biological development contemporaneously.

From The Nature of the Physical World.

SIR JAMES JEANS

OUR GOSSAMER UNIVERSE

UNTIL quite recently, atoms were regarded as the permanent bricks of which the whole universe was built. All the changes of the universe were supposed to amount to nothing more drastic than a rearrangement of permanent indestructible atoms; like a child's box of bricks, these built many buildings in turn. The story of twen-

¹ Professor Percival Lowell (1855-1916), American astronomer.

tieth-century physics is primarily the story of the shattering of this concept.

It was towards the end of the last century that Crookes,¹ Lenard,² and, above all, Sir J. J. Thomson³ first began to break up the atom. The structures which had been deemed the unbreakable bricks of the universe for more than 2,000 years, were suddenly shown to be very susceptible to having fragments chipped off. A milestone was reached in 1895, when Thomson showed that these fragments were identical, no matter what type of atom they came from; they were of equal weight and they carried equal charges of negative electricity. On account of this last property they were called 'electrons.' The atom cannot, however, be built up of electrons and nothing else, for as each electron carries a negative charge of electricity, a structure which consisted of nothing but electrons would also carry a negative charge. Two negative charges of electricity repel one another, as also do two positive charges, while two charges, one of positive and one of negative electricity, attract one another. This makes it easy to determine whether any body or structure carries a positive or a negative charge of electricity, or no charge at all. Observation shows that a complete atom carries no charge at all, so that somewhere in the atom there must be a positive charge of electricity, of amount just sufficient to neutralize the combined negative charges of all the electrons.

In 1911, experiments by Sir Ernest Rutherford⁴ and others revealed the architecture of the atom. As we

¹ Sir William Crookes (1832-1919).

² P. E. A. von Lenard (1862).

³ Sir Joseph John Thomson (1856).

⁴ Sir Ernest Rutherford (1871).

shall soon see, nature herself provides an endless supply of small particles charged with positive electricity, and moving with very high speeds, in the α -particles shot off from radio-active substances. Rutherford's method was in brief to fire these into atoms and observe the result. And the surprising result he obtained was that the vast majority of these bullets passed straight through the atom as though it simply did not exist. It was like shooting at a ghost.

Yet the atom was not all ghostly. A tiny fraction—perhaps one in 10,000—of the bullets were deflected from their courses as if they had met something very substantial indeed. A mathematical calculation showed that these obstacles could only be the missing positive charges of the atoms.

A detailed study of the paths of these projectiles proved that the whole positive charge of an atom must be concentrated in a single very small space, having dimensions of the order of only a millionth of a millionth of an inch. In this way, Rutherford was led to propound the view of atomic structure which is generally associated with his name. He supposed the chemical properties and nature of the atom to reside in a weighty, but excessively minute, central 'nucleus' carrying a positive charge of electricity, around which a number of negatively charged electrons described orbits. It was of course necessary to suppose the electrons to be in motion in the atom, otherwise the attraction of positive for negative electricity would immediately draw them into the central nucleus—just as gravitational attraction would cause the earth to fall into the sun, were it not for the orbital motion of the former. In brief Rutherford supposed the atom to be constructed like the solar system, the heavy central nucleus playing

the part of the sun and the electrons acting the parts of the planets.

The speeds with which these electrons fly round their tiny orbits are terrific. The average electron revolves around its nucleus several thousand million million times every second, with a speed of hundreds of miles a second. Thus the smallness of their orbits does not prevent the electrons moving with higher orbital speeds than the planets, or even the stars themselves.

By clearing a space around the central nucleus, and so preventing other atoms from coming too near to it, these electronic orbits give size to the atom. The volume of space kept clear by the electrons is enormously greater than the total volume of the electrons; roughly, the ratio of volumes is that of the battlefield to the bullets. The atom, with a radius of about 2×10^{-8} cms., has about 100,000 times the diameter, and so about a thousand million million times the volume, of a single electron, which has a radius of only about 2×10^{-13} cms. The nucleus, although it generally weighs 3,000 or 4,000 times as much as all the electrons in the atom together, is at most comparable in size with, and may be even smaller than, a single electron.

We have already commented on the extreme emptiness of astronomical space. Choose a point in space at random, and the odds against its being occupied by a star are enormous. Even the solar system consists overwhelmingly of empty space; choose a spot inside the solar system at random, and there are still immense odds against its being occupied by a planet or even by a comet, meteorite or smaller body. And now we see that this emptiness extends also to the space of physics. Even inside the atom we choose a point at random, and the odds against

there being anything there are immense; they are of the order of at least millions of millions to one. We saw how six specks of dust inside Waterloo Station represented—or rather over-represented—the extent to which space was crowded with stars. In the same way a few wasps—six for the atom of carbon—flying around in Waterloo Station will represent the extent to which the atom is crowded with electrons—all the rest is emptiness. As we pass the whole structure of the universe under review, from the giant nebulæ and the vast inter-stellar and inter-nebular spaces down to the tiny structure of the atom, little but vacant space passes before our mental gaze. We live in a gossamer universe; pattern, plan and design are there in abundance, but solid substance is rare.

From *The Universe Around Us*.

HERE AND THERE

THORNTON WILDER

THE ABBESS TRAINS HER SUCCESSOR

LATELY she had felt not only the breath of old age against her cheek, but a graver warning. A chill of terror went through her, not for herself, but for her work. Who was there in Peru to value the things she had valued? And rising one day at dawn she had made a rapid journey through her hospital and convent and orphanage, looking for a soul she might train to be her successor. She hurried from empty face to empty face, occasionally pausing more from hope than conviction. In the courtyard she came upon a company of girls at work over the linen and her eyes fell at once upon a girl of twelve who was directing the others at the trough and at the same time recounting to them with great dramatic fire the less probable miracles in the life of Saint Rose of Lima. So it was that the search ended with Pepita. The education for greatness is difficult enough at any time, but amid the sensibilities and jealousies of a convent it must be conducted with fantastic indirection. Pepita was assigned to the most disliked tasks in the house, but she came to understand all the aspects of its administration. She accompanied the Abbess on her journeys, even though it was in the capacity of custodian of the eggs and vegetables. And everywhere, by surprise,

hours would open up in which the directress suddenly appeared and talked to her at great length, not only on religious experience, but on how to manage women and how to plan contagious wards and how to beg for money. It was a step in this education for greatness that resulted in Pepita's arriving one day and entering upon the crazy duties of being Doña María's companion. For the first two years she merely came for an occasional afternoon, but finally she came to the palace to live. She had never been taught to expect happiness, and the inconveniences, not to say terrors, of her new position did not seem to her excessive for a girl of fourteen. She did not suspect that the Abbess was even there hovering about the house, herself estimating the stresses and watching for the moment when a burden harms and not strengthens.

A few of Pepita's trials were physical: for example, the servants in the house took advantage of Doña María's indisposition; they opened up the bedrooms of the palace to their relatives; they stole freely. Alone Pepita stood out against them and suffered a persecution of small discomforts and practical jokes. Her mind, similarly, had its distresses: when she accompanied Doña María on her errands in the city, the older woman would be seized with the desire to dash into a church, for what she had lost of religion as faith she had replaced with religion as magic. 'Stay here in the sunlight, my dear child; I shall not be long,' she would say. Doña María would then forget herself in a reverie before the altar and leave the church by another door. Pepita had been brought up by Madre María del Pilar to an almost morbid obedience and when after many hours she ventured into the church and made sure that her mistress was no longer there, still she returned to the street corner

and waited while the shadows fell gradually across the square. Thus waiting in public she suffered all the torture of a little girl's self-consciousness. She still wore the uniform of the orphanage (which a minute's thoughtfulness on the part of Doña María could have altered) and she suffered hallucinations wherein men seemed to be staring at her and whispering—nor were these always hallucinations. No less her heart suffered, for on some days Doña María would suddenly become aware of her and would talk to her cordially and humorously, would let appear for a few hours all the exquisite sensibility of the Letters; then, on the morrow she would withdraw into herself again and, while never harsh, would become impersonal and unseeing. The beginnings of hope and affection that Pepita had such need to expend would be wounded. She tiptoed about the palace, silent, bewildered, clinging only to her sense of duty and her loyalty to her 'mother in the Lord,' Madre María del Pilar, who had sent her there.

From *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.

SAMUEL BUTLER

ON THE ABEYANCE OF MEMORY

WHEN circumstances have led us to change our habits of life—as when the university has succeeded school, or professional life the university—we get into many fresh ways, and leave many old ones. But on revisiting the old scene, unless the lapse of time has been inordinately great, we experience a desire to revert to old habits. We say that old associations crowd upon us. Let a Trinity man, after thirty years' absence from Cambridge, pace for

five minutes in the cloister of Neville's Court, and listen to the echo of his footfall, as it licks up against the end of the cloister, or let an old Johnian stand wherever he likes in the third Court of St. John's, in either case he will find the thirty years drop out of his life, as if they were half an hour; his life will have rolled back upon itself, to the date when he was an undergraduate, and his instinct will be to do almost mechanically, whatever it would have come most natural to him to do, when he was last there at the same season of the year, and the same hour of the day; and it is plain this is due to similarity of environment, for if the place he revisits be much changed, there will be little or no association.

So those who are accustomed at intervals to cross the Atlantic, get into certain habits on board ship, different to their usual ones. It may be that at home they never play whist; on board ship they do nothing else all the evening. At home they never touch spirits; on the voyage they regularly take a glass of something before they go to bed. They do not smoke at home; here they are smoking all day. Once the voyage is at an end, they return without an effort to their usual habits, and do not feel any wish for cards, spirits, or tobacco. They do not remember yesterday, when they did want all these things; at least, not with such force as to be influenced by it in their desires and actions; their true memory—the memory which makes them want, and do, reverts to the last occasion on which they were in circumstances like their present; they therefore want now what they wanted then, and nothing more; but when the time comes for them to go on shipboard again, no sooner do they smell the smell of the ship, than their real memory reverts to the times when they were last at sea, and striking a

balance of their recollections, they smoke, play cards, and drink whisky and water.

We observe it then as a matter of the commonest daily occurrence within our own experience, that memory does fade completely away, and recur with the recurrence of surroundings like those which made any particular impression in the first instance. We observe that there is hardly any limit to the completeness and the length of time during which our memory may remain in abeyance. A smell may remind an old man of eighty of some incident of his childhood, forgotten for nearly as many years as he has lived. In other words, we observe that when an impression has been repeatedly made in a certain sequence on any living organism—that impression not having been prejudicial to the creature itself—the organism will have a tendency, on reassuming the shape and conditions in which it was when the impression was last made, to remember the impression, and therefore to do again now what it did then; all intermediate memories dropping clean out of mind, so far as they have any effect upon action.

Finally, we should note the suddenness and apparent caprice with which memory will assert itself at odd times; we have been saying or doing this or that, when suddenly a memory of something which happened to us, perhaps in infancy, comes into our head; nor can we in the least connect this recollection with the subject of which we have just been thinking, though doubtless there has been a connection, too rapid and subtle for our apprehension.

The foregoing phenomena of memory, so far as we can judge, would appear to be present themselves throughout the animal and vegetable kingdoms. This will be readily admitted as regards animals; as regards plants it

may be inferred from the fact that they generally go on doing what they have been doing most lately, though accustomed to make certain changes at certain points in their existence. When the time comes for these changes, they appear to know it, and either bud forth into leaf, or shed their leaves, as the case may be. If we keep a bulb in a paper bag it seems to remember having been a bulb before, until the time comes for it to put forth roots and grow. Then, if we supply it with earth and moisture, it seems to know where it is, and to go on doing now whatever it did when it was last planted; but if we keep it in the bag too long, it knows that it ought, according to its last experience, to be treated differently, and shows plain symptoms of uneasiness; it is distracted by the bag, which makes it remember its bulbhood, and also by the want of earth and water, without which associations its memory of its previous growth cannot be duly kindled. Its roots, therefore, which are most accustomed to earth and water, do not grow; but its leaves, which do not require contact with these things to jog their memory, make a more decided effort at development—a fact which would seem to go strongly in favour of the functional independence of the parts of all but the very simplest living organisms, if, indeed, more evidence were wanted in support of this.

From Life and Habit.

G. M. TREVELYAN

WYCLIFFE'S TRIAL AT ST. PAUL'S

ON February 19 the Bishops assembled in the Lady Chapel behind the altar and waited for the accused to

appear. The London mob crowded the whole length of the aisle, up which the prisoner had to pass from the main entrance. The personal feelings of the Londoners towards Wycliffe were not those of aversion, and a year later, they broke in on such another tribunal to rescue him from the Bishops. But London was now thinking not of Wycliffe, but of John of Gaunt. The political existence of the great city was that week in fearful danger. The ministers had, in the name of the King, introduced into Parliament then sitting at Westminster a bill framed to take the government of London out of the hands of the Mayor and put it into the hands of the King's Marshal, who was at present represented by Lord Percy. The measure was in the hands of Percy himself, and of Thomas of Woodstock, the younger brother and friend of John of Gaunt, who had just come of age, and now, for the first time, appeared in the political arena. If the bill had been passed, if, which was far more difficult, it had been enforced, the lives and liberties of the citizens would have been at the mercy of the ministers, the support of London would have been removed for ever from the House of Commons, and the dread of London from the evildoers at the Court of Westminster. It may be presumed that citizens that day were thinking of matters that concerned them more nearly than the merits of the prisoner and his judges.

Wycliffe arrived at the door of the great Cathedral and moved slowly up the crowded aisle which boasted to be the longest in Christendom. Four friars from Oxford, each representing one of their four orders, came with him to defend his doctrines. But the prisoner was not supported by logic and learning alone. By his side walked the great Duke; in front strode the King's

Marshal, the Northern lord who proposed to administer border-law in the streets of London. With all the pride of a Percy, he pushed the merchants and prentices to right and left, to make room for his patron and his strange friend. Considering the circumstances of the case, and the violence which the Londoners so often displayed, it is more wonderful that the noblemen returned to Westminster alive, than that the mob forgot for the time their favour to Wycliffe and his doctrine. Courtenay, Bishop of London, who appears to have been in the aisle as the procession moved up it, angrily rebuked Lord Percy for mishandling his flock, declaring that he would never have admitted them into the church if he had known that they were going to behave in this manner. The Duke answered that they would do as they pleased, whether the Bishop liked it or not.

They had now reached the Lady Chapel where the conclave was sitting. The Duke and Lord took chairs for themselves, and Percy bade Wycliffe be seated: 'Since you have much to reply, you will need all the softer seat.' Courtenay, whose hot blood had been already stirred by the insolence the men had shown at their entry, cried out that the suggestion was impertinent, and that the accused should stand to give his answers. The two nobles swore that he should sit; Courtenay, taking the proceedings out of the hands of Archbishop Sudbury, who was glad enough to sit quiet, insisted that the prisoner should stand. The Duke, finding that he could not carry the point, broke out into abuse and threats. He would bring down the pride of all the Bishops of England; Courtenay need not trust in his parents, the Earl and Countess of Devon, for they would have enough to do to take care of themselves. The

Bishop made the obvious answer that he trusted in God and not in his high connections. The Duke, it was afterwards asserted, muttered to his attendants some threat of dragging him out by the hair of his head. The next moment the Londoners had broken in on the proceedings with wild cries of vengeance, and a general *mêlée* ensued between the citizens and the Duke's guard. The assembly broke up in confusion, and the prisoner was carried off by his supporters, whether in triumph or in retreat it was hard to tell. Of Wycliffe's share in the proceedings it can only be asserted that he made no noticeable interference, and that he lost no popularity in London on account of the events of that day. What he thought of it all we can never even guess. Whether he had wished the Duke to accompany him must remain a mystery. He does not mention the scene in any of his works, though he speaks much of his later persecutions. In the roaring crowd of infuriated lords, bishops, and citizens, he stood silent, and stands silent still.

The next day the principal Londoners met together to consider their position. It was necessary to decide on some course of action, for the quarrel between Court and City had been accentuated by the disgraceful scene in St. Paul's and the bill for the destruction of their liberties was being rapidly pushed through the subservient Houses of Parliament. Suddenly Lord Bryan and Lord Fitzwalter, the latter one of the Duke's supporters among the lesser peers, intruded themselves into the conclave of anxious citizens. So high did feeling run that the mob, watching the proceedings of the Council, could scarcely be restrained from tearing the new-comers to pieces. It soon appeared, however, that the two Lords had come on a friendly mission. They were themselves

citizens of London holding large property within its liberties, and Fitzwalter was unwilling to see his rights trampled under foot, even by his own leader, John of Gaunt. They had come to warn the meeting that Lord Percy, without waiting for the passage of the bill, had already assumed the functions of magistrate in London by imprisoning a man in the official residence of the Marshal. The principal citizens, snatching up their arms, rushed to the house, broke in the doors, released the prisoner, flung the stocks in which he had been fastened into the middle of the streets, and made them into a bonfire. Lord Percy was sought under every bed, and in every corner and closet in his house. If he had been found he would never have lived to be made immortal by Border poetry, but would have perished miserably at the hands of mechanics and retailers.

Fortunately he was dining with the Duke in another house in the city. A messenger, wild with fear and haste, burst in on the feasters and told them to fly for their lives. As they leapt up, John of Gaunt struck his knee severely against the table. They hurried down to the river, took boat and crossed to Kennington Palace, where the Black Prince had died, and where his widow still kept house. She received them as refugees, as indeed they were. Nothing but fear of death could have driven the Duke to take shelter with the widow of the Black Prince.

They had done well to cross the river; no place on the north bank was safe. The mob, now quite beyond the restraint of the principal citizens who had begun the riot, but who repudiated its later developments, swept out of the city gates to the Savoy. This residence, the most magnificent belonging to any subject in the land,

had been enlarged and beautified by successive generations of the Earls and Dukes of Lancaster. It stood amid green lawns running down to the banks of the Thames, and pleasure-gardens then famous for their roses, and still remembered because Chaucer loved them and drew from them soft inspiration. If it could have survived the hand of violence, this beautiful palace might to-day be one of the finest monuments of the life and art of the Middle Ages. Unfortunately it was situated half-way between Westminster and London, in a position peculiarly exposed to attack from the city. Here the rioters, not knowing that he had escaped across the river, hoped to find and kill John of Gaunt and to burn his mansion over him. Meeting on their way a priest who was foolish enough to revile Peter de la Mare as a traitor, they beat the unfortunate man to death. News of the uproar was brought to the Bishop of London, who instantly rose from dinner and hastened after them. He overtook them in time, and induced them to relinquish their purpose, so giving to the Savoy another four years of precarious existence, till a more famous riot finally levelled it to the ground. The mob contented itself with parading the streets of London, insulting those of the Duke's supporters whom they met, and reversing his arms which were hung up over a shop in Cheapside. His retainers, who had formerly been seen swaggering and hectoring about the streets under the protection of his badge, now plucked the dangerous symbol from their necks and hid it in their sleeves.

From England in the Age of Wycliffe.

MAX BEERBOHM

HOSTS AND GUESTS

OUR deepest instincts, bad or good, are those which we share with the rest of the animal creation. To offer hospitality, or to accept it, is but an instinct which man has acquired in the long course of his self-development. Lions do not ask one another to their lairs, nor do birds keep open nest. Certain wolves and tigers, it is true, have been so seduced by man from their natural state that they will deign to accept man's hospitality. But when you give a bone to your dog, does he run out and invite another dog to share it with him?—and does your cat insist on having a circle of other cats around her saucer of milk? Quite the contrary. A deep sense of personal property is common to all these creatures. Thousands of years hence they may have acquired some willingness to share things with their friends. Or rather, dogs may; cats, I think, not. Meanwhile, let us not be censorious. Though certain monkeys assuredly were of finer and more malleable stuff than any wolves or tigers, it was a very long time indeed before even we began to be hospitable. The cavemen did not entertain. It may be that now and again—say, towards the end of the Stone Age—one or another among the more enlightened of them said to his wife, while she plucked an eagle that he had snared the day before, 'That red-haired man who lives in the next valley seems to be a decent, harmless sort of person. And sometimes I fancy he is rather lonely. I think I will ask him to dine with us to-night,' and, presently going out, met the red-haired man and said to him, 'Are you doing anything to-night? If not, won't you dine with us? It would be a great pleasure

to my wife. Only ourselves. Come just as you are.' 'That is most good of you, but,' stammered the red-haired man, 'as ill-luck will have it, I *am* engaged to-night. A long-standing, formal invitation. I wish I could get out of it, but I simply can't. I have a morbid conscientiousness about such things.' Thus we see that the will to offer hospitality was an earlier growth than the will to accept it. But we must beware of thinking these two things identical with the mere will to give and the mere will to receive. It is unlikely that the red-haired man would have refused a slice of eagle if it had been offered to him where he stood. And it is still more unlikely that his friend would have handed it to him. Such is not the way of hosts. The hospitable instinct is not wholly altruistic. There is pride and egosim mixed up with it, as I shall show.

Meanwhile, why did the red-haired man babble those excuses? It was because he scented danger. He was not by nature suspicious, but—what possible motive, except murder, could this man have for enticing him to that cave? Acquaintance in the open valley was all very well and pleasant, but a strange den after dark—no, no! You despise him for his fears? Yet these were not really so absurd as they may seem. As man progressed in civilization, and grew to be definitely gregarious, hospitality became more a matter of course. But even then it was not above suspicion. It was not hedged around with those unwritten laws which make it the safe and eligible thing we know to-day. In the annals of hospitality there are many pages that make painful reading; many a great dark blot is there which the Recording Angel may wish, but will not be able, to wipe out with a tear.

If I were a host, I should ignore those tomes. Being

a guest, I sometimes glance into them, but with more of horror, I assure you, than of malicious amusement. I carefully avoid those which treat of hospitality among barbarous races. Things done in the best periods of the most enlightened peoples are quite bad enough. The Israelites were the salt of the earth. But can you imagine a deed of colder-blooded treachery than Jael's? You would think it must have been held accursed by even the basest minds. Yet thus sang Deborah and Barak, 'Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be among women in the tent.' And Barak, remember, was a gallant soldier, and Deborah was a prophetess who 'judged Israel at that time.' So much for the ideals of hospitality among the children of Israel.

Of the Homeric Greeks it may be said that they too were the salt of the earth; and it may be added that in their pungent and antiseptic quality there was mingled a measure of sweetness, not to be found in the children of Israel. I do not say outright that Odysseus ought not to have slain the suitors. That is a debatable point. It is true that they were guests under his roof. But he had not invited them. Let us give him the benefit of the doubt. I am thinking of another episode in his life. By what Circe did, and by his disregard of what she had done, a searching light is cast on the laxity of Homeric Greek notions as to what was due to guests. Odysseus was a clever, but not a bad man, and his standard of general conduct was high enough. Yet, having foiled Circe in her purpose to turn him into a swine, and having forced her to restore his comrades to human shape, he did not let pass the barrier of his teeth any such winged words as 'Now will I bide no more under thy roof, Circe, but fare across the sea with my dear comrades, even unto

mine own home, for that which thou didst was an evil thing, and one not meet to be done unto strangers by the daughter of a god.' He seems to have said nothing in particular, to have accepted with alacrity the invitation that he and his dear comrades should prolong their visit, and to have prolonged it with them for a whole year. . . .

My eye roves, for relief, to those shelves where the later annals are. I take down a tome at random. Rome in the fifteenth century: civilization never was more brilliant than there and then, I imagine; and yet—no, I replace that tome. I saw enough in it to remind me that the Borgias selected and laid down rare poisons in their cellars with as much thought as they gave to their vintage wines. Extraordinary!—but the Romans do not seem to have thought so. An invitation to dine at the Palazzo Borghese was accounted the highest social honour. I am aware that in recent books of Italian history there has been a tendency to whiten the Borgias' characters. But I myself hold to the old romantic black way of looking at the Borgias. I maintain that though you would often in the fifteenth century have heard the snobbish Roman say, in a would-be off-hand tone, 'I am dining with the Borgias to-night,' no Roman ever was able to say, 'I dined last night with the Borgias.'

From *And Even Now*.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

MR. PUNCH

So far this summer seems to have been passed in the shadow of Punch. There are four children in this house and they hardly ever think about anything but Punch—not the paper but the genuine puppet. He can

be seen on the beach every morning and afternoon, and as often as they are allowed to, the children pay him a visit. They are for ever talking about him, discussing him as you or I might discuss Mr. Baldwin, though with more excitement. And nearly every evening, between tea and bedtime, they all act Punch. We seem to have rented a house in Punchdom. If I were to walk out one of these evenings and discover that the beach and promenade were crowded with Punches, Judies, babies, clowns, policemen, beadies, hangmen, comic boxers, and crocodiles, I should not be very surprised. The real people here are quite shadowy. The place is completely dominated by these antique but energetic puppets. I have never seen the mayor of the town, but if I did see him and found that he had a tremendous red nose, staring eyes, a cocked hat and a hump, I doubt if I should be startled. If the town clerk wears a frill in place of a collar, has red spots on his face, and calls himself Joey, I shall refuse to be astonished. Why, even the fishermen here have suspiciously squeaky voices, and there is something curiously wooden about them. And those men who call out as one passes, 'Obble-obble-obble on the motor-boat, sir,' or something like that, is there not something queer about them?

The children, who had not met Mr. Punch before, fell at once, victims of his conquering cudgel. Last year's pantomime could not compare with him. To tell the truth, they hardly laughed at all at the pantomime. Astonishingly nimble and industrious drolls tumbled about the stage, smashed crockery, threw flour and water at one another, but all to no purpose. The children regarded them with wide, innocent eyes, into which there crept, after a time, a certain hardening of contempt. I

laughed until the tears ran down my cheeks, especially at the man who, being told to count the cups and plates, promptly smashed them with a hammer, but the children hardly smiled. The eldest of them was simply indignant with the plate-smashing man; she said he was 'stupid'; she knew that that was no way to count plates. No, the pantomime was not a success. But the moment they saw Mr. Punch, they were enraptured. His performance was not a large and confusing affair, like the pantomime; it was small and delightful and, in its own fantastic way, sensible. I doubt if they had ever been told anything about Punch, but they understood him at a glance and he immediately took a place beside Red Riding Hood and the Three Bears. Indeed, he soon became more important, if only because you had only to go down to the beach to find him doing something, and perhaps something he had never done before. In one bound he became the most important person in the place, one to be discussed from every point of view. There was great talk in the nursery about 'Mr. Punch's house,' and I was consulted almost at once, for I am regarded there as an authority on what are called 'funnies.' The general impression seems to be that Punch and I are old friends—probably at school together. I do my best to live up to this greatness that has been thrust upon me, but it is very hard work.

Punches differ, I suppose. We are lucky in ours here. He is a Punch of temperament. Thus, he will not come out at all until the younger members of the audience have shouted—and at the very top of their voices too—that they are ready and waiting. 'Louder, louder!' he squeaks from the mysterious depths; and all the children yell away. But once he is out, you could not ask for a

more free-and-easy fellow. He is not one of your Punches who must go through the routine adventures with babies and hangmen and will not do anything else. No, our Punch likes to have fun with everybody. He is mischievous and he is also very conceited—'That's the way to do it,' he is always saying, like the artist he is—but he is the best playfellow in the world. His gusto is magnificent. He does not merely throw the baby out once, he throws it out any number of times. No sooner has it gone than he asks to have it back so that he can throw it out again. His fun with the Master is endless. (The Master is the man who stands at the side—when he is not going round with the hat.) He even steals the Master's hat and throws a frying pan at him. He is fond of luring little boys to stand close to the stage, and then he likes to snatch their caps. •If little girls come up, he insists upon kissing them—'Kissee, kissee, kissee,' he squeaks shamelessly—and he always tells the Master that he wants to kiss all the bigger girls who are standing at the back. This he is not allowed to do, so frequently he encourages a bout between two unusually ferocious boxers, who fight so long that both are tired out and are then knocked on the head very easily. At other times, he will give out prizes or sing songs that the children must repeat after him. How they shout when he asks them, as he always does, if they have seen the baby or the crocodile!

Some time ago there arrived at this house a large parcel, out of which came a Punch, a Judy with a particularly long, unpleasant face, a Baby that looked like a member of a German Youth movement, a beadle or other functionary with a three-cornered hat, a policeman with a red beard and a spiked helmet—a creature too exotic for

our taste—and a Devil, horns and all. This was the best that the toy-shop (and Germany) could do for us in the matter of children's Punch sets, and though there was no clown (a great loss), no crocodile, and no hangman, we managed very well. These puppets had not been with us a week, however, before Mr. Punch, this new, little Mr. Punch, of course, not the real one on the beach, was lost. Search parties went out, but he was never found. He may have gone back to Germany; he may have run away with another and prettier Judy; he may have been frightened by the bigger Punch; we do not know what happened to him. Out of this catastrophe, however, I plucked the white flower of one ecstatic afternoon, during which I turned the Devil into Punch. I cut off his horns; I carved the face; I scraped off what was left of the old paint; then with a sixpenny box of colours from Woolworth's I repainted the face, made a fine hat out of the corner of a stout foolscap envelope, and—behold!—the Devil was no more and Punch had come back again. Is there an allegory in this?

And now my Punch gives a show, popping up from behind an armchair or settee and squeaking 'That's the way to do it,' at least once a day here. He throws things nearly as well as the proper Punch down on the beach. Indeed, he is rather too enthusiastic about throwing things. But a wonderful thing has happened—to him, to all of us. This needs the glory of italics and it shall have them. *He has been recognized by the proper Mr. Punch.* Isn't that amazing? But that is not all. Not only has our little Punch been recognized by his big brother, but so have all the four children. It happened one morning last week, and we were so excited afterwards that we could hardly eat our lunch. Some-

body in this house must have guessed that something unusual was about to happen because the children were told that they could go and see Punch and take their own puppet with them—but that only makes it all the more mysterious. Mr. Punch called up all the four children, he knew their names; he knew that one of them had been ill not long ago; and he knew that they had a little Punch of their own, and when he saw him, he was very pleased and proud, so that you could tell at once that our Punch really was a member of the family.

If you should point out that we are overdoing this Punch business, I doubt if I should disagree with you. There can be too much Punchery. You are beginning to think that we are snobs, with our 'Punch this' and 'Punch that.' I suppose we are. But—dash it all!—do you realize that we know him, that he has spoken to us? Has he ever spoken to you? No, I thought not.

From *The Balconinny*.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

THE WORLD OF WORDS

WITH words literature begins, and to words it must return. Coloured by the neighbourhood of silence, solemnized by thought or steeled by action, words are still its only means of rising above words. '*Accedat verbum ad elementum,*' said St. Ambrose, '*et fiat sacramentum.*' So the elementary passions, pity and love, wrath and terror, are not in themselves poetical; they must be wrought upon by the word to become poetry. In no other way can suffering be transformed to pathos, or horror reach its apotheosis in tragedy.

When all has been said, there remains a residue capable

of no formal explanation. Language, this array of conventional symbols loosely strung together, and blown about by every wandering breath, is miraculously vital and expressive, justifying not a few of the myriad superstitions that have always attached to its use. The same words are free to all, yet no wealth or distinction of vocabulary is needed for a group of words to take the stamp of an individual mind and character. 'As a quality of style,' says Mr. Pater, 'soul is a fact.' To resolve how words, like bodies, become transparent when they are inhabited by that luminous reality, is a higher pitch than metaphysic wit can fly. Ardent persuasion and deep feeling enkindle words, so that the weakest take on glory. The humblest and most despised of common phrases may be the chosen vessel for the next avatar of the spirit. It is the old problem, to be met only by the old solution of the Platonist, that

Soul is form, and doth the body make.

The soul is able to inform language by some strange means other than the choice and arrangement of words and phrases. Real novelty of vocabulary is impossible; in the matter of language we lead a parasitical existence, and are always quoting. Quotations, conscious or unconscious, vary in kind according as the mind is active to work upon them and make them its own. In its grossest and most servile form quotation is a lazy folly; a thought has received some signal or notorious expression, and as often as the old sense, or something like it, recurs, the old phrase rises to the lips. This degenerates to simple phrase-mongering, and those who practise it are not vigilantly jealous of their meaning. Such an expression as 'fine by degrees and beautifully less' is often no more than a bloated equivalent for a single

word—say ‘diminishing’ or ‘shrinking.’ Quotations like this are the warts and excremental parts of language; the borrowings of good writers are never thus superfluous, their quotations are appropriations. Whether it be by some witty turn given to a well-known line, by an original setting for an old saw, or by a new and unlooked-for analogy, the stamp of the borrower is put upon the goods he borrows, and he becomes part owner. Plagiarism is a crime only where writing is a trade; expression need never be bound by the law of copyright while it follows thought, for thought, as some great thinker has observed, is free. The words were once Shakespeare’s; if only you can feel them as he did, they are yours now no less than his. The best quotations, the best translations, the best thefts, are all equally new and original works. From quotation, at least, there is no escape, inasmuch as we learn language from others. All common phrases that do the dirty work of the world are quotations—poor things, and not our own. Who first said that a book would ‘repay perusal,’ or that any gay scene was ‘bright with all the colours of the rainbow’? There is no need to condemn these phrases, for language has a vast deal of inferior work to do. The expression of thought, temperament, attitude, is not the whole of its business. It is only a literary fop or doctrinaire who will attempt to remind all the small, defaced coinage that passes through his hands, only a lisping young fantastico who will refuse all conventional garments and all conventional speech. At a modern wedding the frock-coat is worn, the presents are ‘numerous and costly,’ and there is an ‘ovation accorded to the happy pair.’ These things are part of our public civilization, a decorous and accessible uniform,

not to be lightly set aside. But let it be a friend of your own who is to marry, a friend of your own who dies, and you are to express yourself—the problem is changed, you feel all the difficulties of the art of style, and fathom something of the depth of your unskill. Forbidden silence, we should be in a poor way indeed.

Single words too we plagiarize, when we use them without realization and mastery of their meaning. The best argument for a succinct style is this, that if you use words you do not need, or do not understand, you cannot use them well. It is not what a word means, but what it means to you, that is of the deepest import. Let it be a weak word, with a poor history behind it, if you have done good thinking with it, you may yet use it to surprising advantage. But if, on the other hand, it be a strong word that has never aroused more than a misty idea and a flickering emotion in your mind, here lies your danger. You may use it, for there is none to hinder; and it will betray you. The commonest Saxon words prove explosive machines in the hands of rash impotence. It is perhaps a certain uneasy consciousness of danger, a suspicion that weakness of soul cannot wield these strong words, that makes debility avoid them, committing itself rather, as if by some pre-established affinity, to the vaguer Latinized vocabulary. Yet they are not all to be avoided, and their quality in practice will depend on some occult ability in their employer. For every living person, if the material were obtainable, a separate historical dictionary might be compiled, recording where each word was first heard or seen, where and how it was first used. The references are utterly beyond recovery; but such a register would throw a strange light on individual styles. The

eloquent trifler, whose stock of words has been accumulated by a pair of light fingers, would stand denuded of his plausible pretences as soon as it were seen how roguishly he came by his eloquence. There may be literary quality, it is well to remember, in the words of a parrot, if only its cage has been happily placed; meaning and soul there cannot be. Yet the voice will sometimes be mistaken, by the carelessness of chance listeners, for a genuine utterance of humanity; and the like is true in literature. But writing cannot be luminous and great save in the hands of those whose words are their own by inheritance, or by conquest. Life is spent in learning the meaning of great words, so that some idle proverb, known for years and accepted perhaps as a truism, comes home, on a day, like a blow. 'If there were not a God,' said Voltaire, 'it would be necessary to invent him.' Voltaire had therefore the right to use the word, but some of those who use it most, if they would be perfectly sincere, should enclose it in quotation marks. Whole nations go for centuries without coining names for certain virtues; is it credible that among other peoples, where the names exist, the need for them is epidemic? The author of *Ecclesiastical Polity* puts a bolder and truer face on the matter. 'Concerning that Faith, Hope and Charity,' he writes, 'without which there can be no salvation, was there ever any mention made saving only in that Law which God himself hath from Heaven revealed? There is not in the world a syllable muttered with certain truth concerning any of these three, more than hath been supernaturally received from the mouth of the eternal God.' However they came to us, we have the words; they, and many other terms of tremendous import, are bandied

about from mouth to mouth and alternately enriched or impoverished in meaning. Is the 'Charity' of St. Paul's Epistle one with the charity of 'charity-blankets'? Are the 'crusades' of Godfrey and of the great St. Louis, where knightly achievement did homage to the religious temper, essentially the same as that process of harrying the wretched and the outcast for which the muddle-headed, greasy citizen of to-day invokes the same high name? Of a truth, some kingly words fall to a lower estate than Nebuchadnezzar.

Here, among words, our lot is cast, to make or mar. It is in this obscure thicket, overgrown with weeds, set with thorns, and haunted by shadows, this World of Words, as the Elizabethans finely called it, that we wander, eternal pioneers, during the course of our mortal lives. 'To be overtaken by a master, one who comes along with the gaiety of assured skill and courage, with the gravity of unflinching purpose, to make the crooked ways straight and the rough places plain, is to gain fresh confidence from despair. He twines wreaths of the entangling ivy, and builds ramparts of the thorns. He blazes his mark upon the secular oaks, as a guidance to later travellers, and coaxes flame from heaps of mouldering rubbish. There is no sense of cheer like this. Sincerity, clarity, candour, power, seem real once more, real and easy. In the light of great literary achievement, straight and wonderful, like the roads of the ancient Romans, barbarism torments the mind like a riddle. Yet there are the dusky barbarians!—fleeing from the harmonious tread of the ordered legions, running to hide themselves in the morass of vulgar sentiment, to ambush their nakedness in the sand-pits of low thought.

From *Style*.

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